

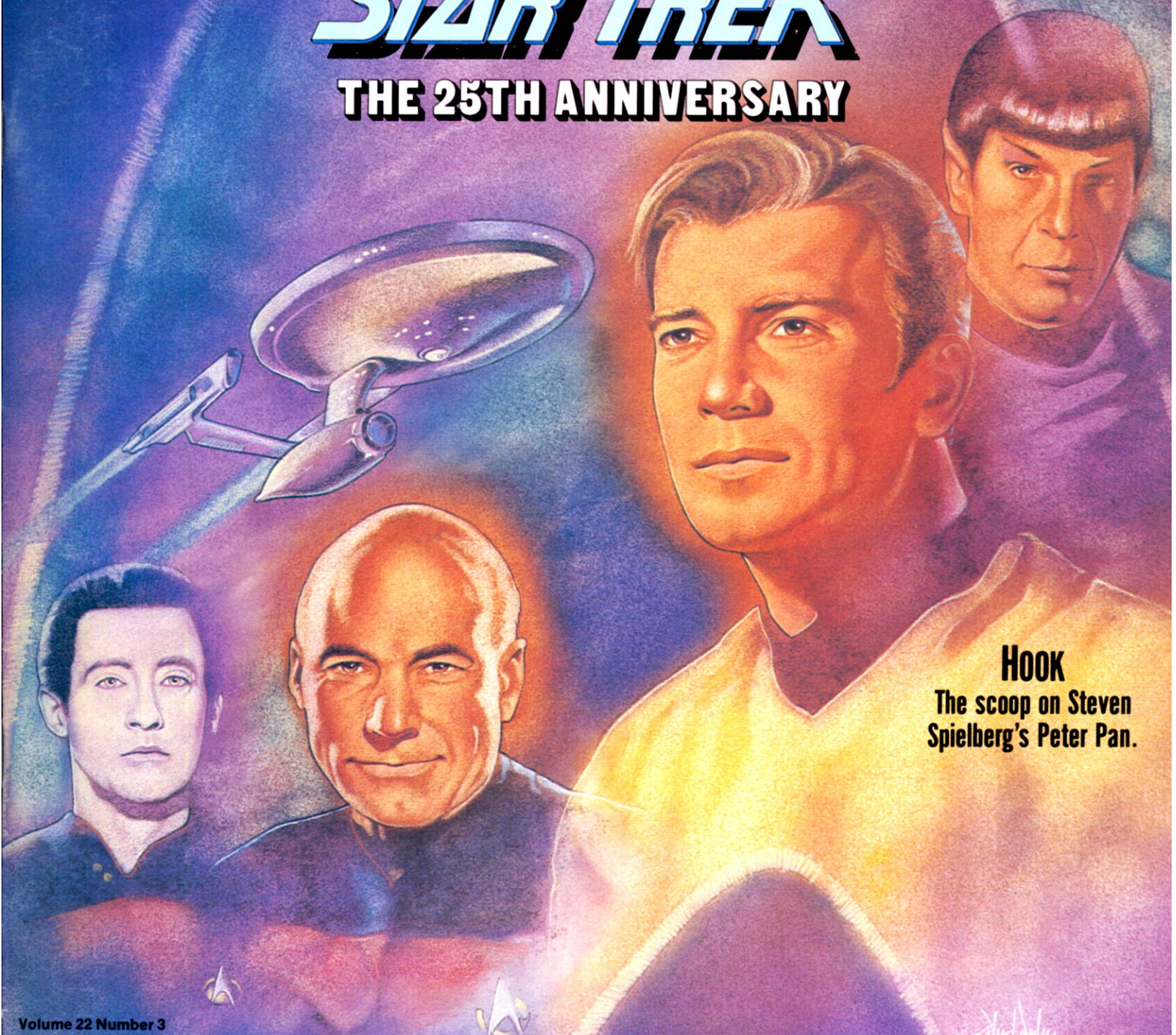
CINEFANTASTIQUE

December 1991

\$5.50
CAN \$6.50
UK £3.75

STAR TREK

THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY



HOOK
The scoop on Steven Spielberg's Peter Pan.

Volume 22 Number 3



THE ADDAMS FAMILIES
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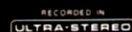
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CINEFANTASTIQUE

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VOLUME 22 NUMBER 3

The magazine with a "Sense of Wonder."

DECEMBER, 1991

To celebrate STAR TREK's 25th Anniversary, we've assembled articles that focus on Gene Roddenberry, the show's creator, from the Classic Series to the movies, to THE NEXT GENERATION. There's also a preview of Paramount's forthcoming STAR TREK VI and a "fascinating" inside look at the movie series as seen by deposed production exec Harve Bennett.

The issue has been fun to assemble because STAR TREK has a special place in my heart—no, not because it sells well on the newsstand. I was among the Labor Day audience in 1966 at Cleveland's World Science Fiction Convention that came to its feet in a standing ovation when Roddenberry first screened the show's pilot episodes. No film or show, before or since, has captured the grand sweep of "space opera" as well as STAR TREK, especially in its ability to exploit science fiction's capacity to explore ideas and concepts as well as the genre's potential for drama, excitement and adventure. Needless to say, I never missed an episode of the original series. THE NEXT GENERATION has not kept me so rapt a viewer, nor have the feature films, in my estimation, ever lived up to the quality of the original show.

Critic Thomas Doherty picks STAR TREK'S top ten in his coda to our Anniversary coverage. Since we all have our favorite shows, here are mine:

1. "The Side of Paradise"
2. "Metamorphosis"
3. "Space Seed"
4. "The City On the Edge of Forever"
5. "Where No Man Has Gone Before"
6. "Charlie X"
7. "The Paradise Syndrome"
8. "Balance of Terror"
9. "Is There In Truth No Beauty"
10. "The Gamemasters of Triskellion"

It's surprising to see so many love stories among my best remembered shows—passion is surely what's lacking on THE NEXT GENERATION—but as a teenager in the '60s that's what hit home. They say STAR TREK VI is about Spock in love. It may be an old story, but maybe it's time for an old story.

Frederick S. Clarke



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Publisher & Editor: Frederick S. Clarke. **Bureaus:** New York/Dan Scapperotti. Los Angeles/Steve Biodrowski, Sheldon Teitelbaum.

London: Alan Jones. **Toronto:** Gary Kimber. **Contributors:** Lawrence Brooks, Mark Dawidziak, Thomas Doherty, Dennis Fischer, Robert T. Garcia, Dann Gire, Judith Harris, Randall D. Larson, Charles Leayman, Thomas Nilsson, Dan Persons, Daniel Schweiger, Sue Uram, David Wilt, Gary L. Wood.

Editorial Operations Manager: Elaine Fiedler. **Editorial Production:** Lisa A. Tomczak. **Production Assistant:** Ruth Kopala.

Circulation: Michael L. Morrow. **Business Manager:** Celeste Casey Clarke.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: Perpetual Motion Pictures, Mitch Persons, Larry Tetewsky. **COVER ART:** John Hanley.

CINEFANTASTIQUE MAGAZINE (ISSN 0145-6032) is published bimonthly in February, April, June, August, October and December at 7240 W. Roosevelt Rd., Forest Park, IL 60130. (708) 366-5566. Second class postage paid at Forest Park, IL 60130. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to CINEFANTASTIQUE, P.O. Box 270, Oak Park IL 60303. **Subscriptions:** Four Issues \$18, Eight Issues \$34, Twelve Issues \$48. (Foreign & Canada: Four issues \$21, Eight Issues \$39, Twelve Issues \$55). Single copies when purchased from publisher: \$8. **Retail Distribution:** In the U.S. by Eastern News Distributors, 250 W. 55th St., New York, N.Y. 10019. (1-800-221-3148). In Great Britain by Titan Distributors, P.O. Box 250, London E3 4RT. Phone: (01) 980-6167. **Submissions** of artwork and articles are encouraged but must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Printed in USA. Contents copyright © 1991 by Frederick S. Clarke. **CINEFANTASTIQUE®** is a Registered U.S. Trademark.

THE RETURN OF

Back behind the camera, after three years,

By Thomas Nilsson
and Steve Biodrowski

It's a hot, humid day in Los Angeles and the glowing sun seemed to burn a hole in the sky as John Carpenter opened the door to his comfortably air-conditioned office. Carpenter was calm and relaxed, casually dressed in jeans and a Lakers T-shirt, his silvery grey hair collected in a ponytail. Carpenter noted that coffee—black—is an absolute essential to get him started, as he poured ample servings.

Out of the limelight since *THEY LIVE* (1988), the "Master of Suspense" who wrote and directed *HALLOWEEN*, is back at work again, turning the Harry F. Saint novel *The Memoirs of the Invisible Man* into a big-budget Warner Bros movie, featuring the special effects of ILM. Chevy Chase stars as the titular character, with release set for December 13, in competition with the opening of *STAR TREK VI*.

"This is kind of a strange take on the invisible man," said Carpenter, easygoing and happy to talk about his work. "He's a sympathetic character, a stupid yuppie who turns invisible after an accident and who tries to continue his life. It's a comedy-thriller and it should be fun."

Sure, audiences have seen invisibility on the silver screen, but *MEMOIRS OF AN INVISIBLE MAN* promises to show them several things never shown before, including the invisible man himself. Why is the invisible man visible to the audience? Because he's the star of the movie. Actually, the film's source material, Saint's novel, is a first-person account of the predicament of a character rendered invisible by a scientific accident; consequently, the filmmakers needed a

"This is a kind of strange take on the invisible man," said Carpenter. "He's sympathetic, a stupid yuppie who turns invisible by accident and tries to continue with his life."



Associate producer Sandy King (l) and Carpenter, directing Universal's *THEY LIVE* in 1988. Carpenter married King after his divorce from actress Adrienne Barbeau.

cinematic device to make their protagonist's actions and reactions as clear to viewers as they had been to readers. The script's solution is to tell the story, in flashback, from the point-of-view of the invisible man, whose voice-over informs us that "when I play it all back in my mind, I still see myself as normal and whole."

For Carpenter, two of the main challenges in directing the picture were finding the right tone and establishing the right point-of-view to determine whether or not Chase would be visible. "That's why parts of it had to be planned out extremely well," said Carpenter. "In every scene, you have to figure out whose point-of-view you're telling if from and shoot it that way. The balance is very tricky. Parts of it I just shoot

two ways. In a lot of scenes, Chevy's not there at all. Some scenes, he's there all the time—some scenes, there's no tension or drama without him, I noticed immediately. I left myself some choices in the editing room, because I'm not certain in a couple of scenes."

As far as maintaining the proper tone while combining suspense, romance and comedy, Carpenter's solution is simply to tell the story. "Chevy Chase plays the dramatic scenes with drama," said Carpenter. "He's going to take his situation seriously. He's not going to wink at the audience and say, 'Hey, I'm goofing off!' He's done a terrific job. I've always wanted to work with Chevy Chase; I've always been a big fan. He wants to try to do something with this. I think

he's burned out on the comedies he's been doing, and he has some contempt for them."

When Carpenter joined the project in April, 1990, he asked for revisions to the film's script. "The script was not right," said Carpenter. "But I liked the premise: this guy who's not committed to anything undergoes an accident and discovers who he is. The problem with the book was that the girl [played by Daryl Hannah] was not in it until the third act. We brought her into the first act—he meets her before he becomes invisible—and it strengthened the romantic aspect. The movie isn't quite the book, and yet it is—it has the essence of the book."

Turning to comedy isn't a deliberate move for Carpenter to "escape" from the genre—horror and science fiction—in which he has worked almost exclusively. "I really can't go in another direction because the movies come and find me," he said. "When I got into this business all I wanted to do was make westerns. And I haven't made one, except for a television movie. Instead I got associated with horror movies—which I love dearly—and that's usually what I get offered."

Carpenter noted that he's choosy about the projects he takes on. *MEMOIRS OF AN INVISIBLE MAN* is his bid for a mainstream hit, though he's turned down the opportunity to direct films in the past, such as *TOP GUN* and *FATAL ATTRACTION*. "And I'm not sorry that I did," said Carpenter. "I think they're both pieces of shit. They were both movies that I thought, 'Why do they want me to do it?' Especially *FATAL ATTRACTION*. That was Clint Eastwood's *PLAY MISTY FOR ME* all over again. And I can't do that as well as Eastwood."

JOHN CARPENTER

directing MEMOIRS OF AN INVISIBLE MAN.

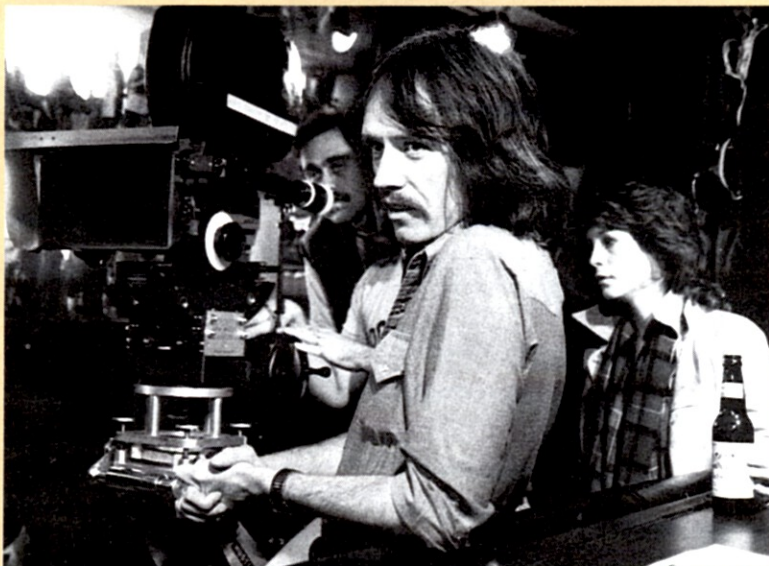
Carpenter termed *FATAL ATTRACTION* a “yuppie horror movie.” He is particularly upset by the fact that the producers changed the film’s original “unhappy” ending at the urging of test-audiences. “The movie business has changed so much in the past five years,” said Carpenter. “Now you *have* to play it ‘safe.’ That means happy endings, no bumps on the road. Everything has to be smooth and quick. It all has to look like commercials or MTV videos. People hate using their imagination. They want it all spelled out!

“But even back in the ‘50s and ‘60s some of the pictures were certainly not the kind of ‘happy ending bullshit’—excuse me—we see nowadays. Really, literally, directors don’t want to hold onto a shot more than ten seconds because they think the audience is gonna be bored. And that’s the problem with the new generation brought up with MTV.”

Though he doesn’t expect any ratings hassles on his current project, Carpenter decries the current film ratings system, which he feels amounts to film censorship. “It’s simply terrible,” said Carpenter. “Any kind of censorship is terrible. I think that everything should be allowed.”

Carpenter said he was told by a British journalist that British censors were actually considering the withdrawal of *HALLOWEEN* from distribution because a crazed killer had claimed to be Michael Myers reincarnated. “My reaction is that movies don’t make people kill,” said Carpenter. “It’s life that does it.”

Carpenter noted that he first ran afoul of the MPAA in this country trying to secure a rat-



Carpenter with Jamie Leigh Curtis in 1980, directing *THE FOG*, one of his early hits.

ing for *ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13*, his second feature in 1976. The MPAA wanted to slap the movie with an X because of a scene where a little girl gets killed. Carpenter was told to cut the scene, and he did—but only from the print that was sent to the MPAA. “They gave the film an R,” chuckled Carpenter. “But we didn’t touch the rest of the prints. They all went out uncut.”

In 1987, Carpenter said the MPAA wanted to slap an X on his *PRINCE OF DARKNESS*. But this time, Carpenter noted that he had the backing of a big studio—Universal—and the MPAA backed off. “If you belong to a big studio, you pretty much get what you want,” said Carpenter. “All the big commercial movies don’t get hit on very hard by the MPAA, but the smaller films that are more adult-themed do. And that’s the corruption of the whole system.”

Carpenter noted he has no plans to make an oft-announced sequel to his 1981 low-budget hit *ESCAPE FROM NEW*

YORK. “We played around with an idea called *ESCAPE FROM LOS ANGELES* for about fifteen minutes,” said Carpenter. “But we couldn’t come up with a story. The script we had was basically the first one over again and that wouldn’t work. I don’t think there will ever be a sequel.”

Carpenter isn’t fond of sequels because they tend to go over the same ground. And he’s not pleased with being linked to the numerous follow-ups to his seminal 1978 shocker *HALLOWEEN*. “Financially I have been involved in all the sequels,” said Carpenter, who helped produce II and III, “but not as a creative force.”

Carpenter tried to abandon the slasher formula with *HALLOWEEN III*, based on a script by Nigel Kneale. “We really tried to do something different,” recalled Carpenter. “We had a very interesting, off-beat horror story. The movie didn’t turn out that way because the audience just wanted to see the old movie again. I haven’t bothered watching the offsprings. The

second sequel stinks. It’s just the same film over again.”

Though sequels are out for Carpenter, remakes aren’t. He is currently involved in mounting a new version of *THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON*, a project he’s very enthusiastic about. Universal had originally tried to develop the project with John Landis and the late Jack Arnold, who directed the original.

“This will be one of the two films I’m under contract to deliver for Universal,” said Carpenter. “And it’ll be fun. It won’t be the original horror classic we’ll see over again. I am going to make a very different movie.”

Carpenter wouldn’t go into plot specifics but noted that British screenwriter Nigel Kneale has delivered a script that goes beyond the original, with several interesting twists and turns. “The problem,” said Carpenter, “is the studio

continued on next page

From Bowling Green, Kentucky to Hollywood, Carpenter’s school photo, a film fan whose dream came true.



wants to make the original movie over again.”

Books line the walls of Carpenter's office, including many by Stephen King. “Some of his work I like a lot,” Carpenter offered. “Some of them I don't care for too much. I'd just love to do *THE TOMMYKNOCKERS*—that's a real creepy story.”

Next to filmmaking, Carpenter's second love is music. He has worked on the scores for many of his own pictures. “I still like to do that when I can,” he said. “Although I can't play orchestral music, I can do electronics and synthesizers and the music I make really helps what I have shot.” For his scoring endeavors, Carpenter works out of a studio in Glendale with longtime associate, Alan Howarth. Carpenter said he had no plans to work on the score for *MEMOIRS OF AN INVISIBLE MAN* because it requires a different sound.

“It's very helpful making your own music if a scene isn't working, or if you need to move the audience in a certain direction,” said Carpenter. “That's when I put my music on top. Besides, I'm cheap and I'm fast,” he laughed.

At one time, Carpenter belonged to a band formed with friends and fellow filmmakers Tommy Lee Wallace and Nick Castle, who played “The Shape” in the original *HALLOWEEN*. Carpenter and Wallace have been chums since the fourth grade. Carpenter met Castle when they were students at USC. “The problem is that the three of us don't have that much time to spend with one another any more,” said Carpenter. “We still like to get together and rehearse. We even released an album once, back in 1985, I think it was.”

Though he's given up playing, Carpenter said he still enjoys listening to music. “I love all kinds: rock classic, country—you name it. I'm a big blues fan.”

Carpenter said he takes a great interest in current events and politics. And he worries a lot, too, about national problems as well as foreign affairs. Carpenter said he's very concerned about fallout from the recent Gulf war. “The problem is that we now have a whole

“The movie business has changed so much in the last five years,” said Carpenter. “Now you have to play it safe. That means happy endings. No bumps in the road.”



Carpenter (r), a 24-year-old student at USC directing *DARK STAR* in 1972, with (l to r) cameraman Doug Knapp, and actors Brian Narelle and Carl Kuniholm.

generation of kids who actually think war is cool,” he said. “The point with the Vietnam war was ‘no more,’ but we've already forgotten that.”

Carpenter's world view is a bleak one. “I worry because most nations in the world want the same standard of living America has, and the Earth can't sustain it. There are not enough resources. So what country are you going to turn to and say, ‘You can't have this, you can't do this?’ Which third world country are you going to tell, ‘You have to stay where you are because we don't have enough resources—gas, oil, food or electricity?’” Carpenter also lamented the destruction of the Amazon rain forests, an issue he said will be raised in his remake of *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON*.

While shooting *THEY LIVE* in 1988, mostly late at night on seedy locations in downtown Los Angeles, Carpenter noted how he and his crew came face-to-face with the homeless, the poor and the hardcore criminals who wander the streets. “One night there were even gunshots nearby,” recalled Carpenter. “And they were *not* included in our script.” Car-

penter noted that it's not uncommon to hear the sound of gunfire near his home at night.

“The world has not become a safer place to live in,” observed Carpenter. “I believe that we're going to have something close to a race-war in this country. We have ten years of frustration from the black community that will blast out very soon.” But Carpenter remains, nevertheless, upbeat. “I believe in this country,” he said. “In the end, I think all will be well. The next generation will have to deal with a lot of problems, though.”

If it sounds like Carpenter may not be the ideal choice to direct a Chevy Chase comedy, it should be noted that the director is clearly happy and content with his lot in life. Following his well-publicized divorce from actress Adrienne Barbeau, Carpenter has remarried, to Sandy King, who served as an associate producer/script supervisor on *THEY LIVE*. What makes Carpenter laugh? “*THE SIMPSONS*,” he said, smiling. “And cartoons. I love to watch *THE THREE STOOGES* with my six-year-old son.”

Though he has chosen to

make a comedy, Carpenter stressed he has no plans to abandon the horror genre. “I love horror films,” he said. “Scaring people is always fun and I enjoy doing just that. It's not very hard, either. In my approach to movies I'm pretty secure of being able to make people scared in a couple of places. It all comes down to the story, if it's going to be really good. I'm always keeping an eye out for a good horror story. It's difficult to make a supernatural movie believable. Love stories are possible in real life, most horror plots are not, so you really have to convince your audience to believe in what they see.”

Looking back on his career, Carpenter claimed to have no particular favorites among his own movies. “For different reasons I like different movies,” he said. “My movies are like kids, even if some of them didn't turn out the way I wanted them to, I love them all. I invested my heart in them.

“I have to admit that I really enjoyed *THE THING* a lot.” Carpenter smiled. “I thought that one was pretty good.”

Carpenter's future projects include the possibility of a sequel to *THEY LIVE*, a thriller called *AT MIDNIGHT*, and *VICTORY OUT OF TIME*, a time-travel story. Thanks to home video, a whole new generation is currently rediscovering Carpenter's distinctive genre efforts. “Once there was this guy who approached me about doing a book on me,” recalled Carpenter. “This guy tells me, ‘I grew up with your films.’ My reaction was ‘Jesus, how *old am I?*’ That was a little depressing.” Carpenter smiled. “But it's also very nice. I was very flattered.”

After fourteen films in seventeen years, since Carpenter debuted with his USC student film *DARK STAR* in 1974, Carpenter's work has developed a fan following in the genre. He's not sure how he feels about being a “cult director.” Carpenter leaned back in his chair, put his hand behind his neck and smiled again.

“Man, I don't know,” he said. “I really don't know. I just make movies and the rest is all a mystery to me. I'll just keep working.” □

MEMOIRS OF AN INVISIBLE MAN

Carpenter gets hitched to a Chevy Chase comedy-thriller.

By Steve
Bodrowski

Genre veteran John Carpenter's return to directing after a three year hiatus is a \$40 million effort produced by Bruce Bodner and Dan Kolsrud, opening December 13. Chevy Chase stars as invisible man Nick Halloway. Sam Neill (*Damien* in *THE FINAL CONFLICT*) co-stars as Jenkins, a villainous undercover operative trying forcibly to recruit Halloway as a secret agent. Daryl Hannah (*SPLASH*) plays love-interest Alice. Production design by Lawrence Paull (*BLADE RUNNER*) includes a five-story set of a semi-invisible building.

After three months of principal photography on the lot at Warner Brothers and on location in Los Angeles and San Francisco, the production moved to Marin County in mid-June, where Industrial Light and Magic was to add a variety of sight gags like cigarette smoke inhaled into invisible lungs, including one mentioned in the dialogue of James Whale's *THE INVISIBLE MAN* (1932) but never shown: undigested food remaining visible in an invisible stomach.

Long in development prior to Carpenter signing on as director, Bodner bought the Henry F. Saint source novel in manuscript form—just three fourths complete—and brought it to Warner Bros in 1986. "It's a poignant story that deals with the predicament of invisibility, not necessarily the fantasy of how wonderful it would be," said Bodner. "Both Chevy Chase and I found it very



Chase as the invisible man, visible to audiences because he's the star.

smart. The author deals with things you never quite thought about."

With Chase attached to star, the script went through a long development period. Though the basic story line was established by the novel, finding the right tone proved tricky, because the intention was not to make a typical Chevy Chase comedy vehicle but an action-adventure romance with some comedy relief. "It's a very delicate balance,"

said Bodner. "We didn't want to rush a film that was a real passion of Chevy's for the last four years, so we spent a lot of time making sure the script was right. William Goldman did a draft under director Ivan Reitman. I think Ivan would have been prepared to shoot the Goldman script three and a half years ago, but we just didn't feel that was the type of project we wanted to do. It was more comedic; in tone it was much broader; it varied much further from the book." Scriptors Robert Collector and Dana Olsen were brought in

An invisible building, production design by *BLADE RUNNER*'s Lawrence G. Paull.



Chase's hospital fantasy, as doctors try to save him after a scientific mishap that renders him invisible.

to write a series of drafts to get the right balance of humor, romance, and adventure. "We think we finally got all those pieces together," said Bodner.

Chase acknowledged that convincing audiences to take him seriously in the role will be difficult. Another hurdle will be the fact that Chase, like Patrick Swayze in *GHOST*, will be visible most of the time as the invisible man. "There are only certain shots when I'm not seen, points-of-view of the other characters," said Chase. "That was tough for former directors, who might have tackled the project, to deal with. They

didn't know when Nick should or shouldn't be seen. For me, it was never a real problem. It's pretty clear, generally speaking, that when it's the audience in the theatre's point-of-view, you should be able to see what Nick is doing. It's a question of the director giving the audience the right balance of cuts, both their point-of-view and the point-of-view of the other characters.

"Besides," added Chase, "You can't make a movie about a guy who's invisible and then not show the movie's star—the studio wouldn't like it." □

STAR TREK

THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY

The faces have aged, but the Enterprise is still soaring.

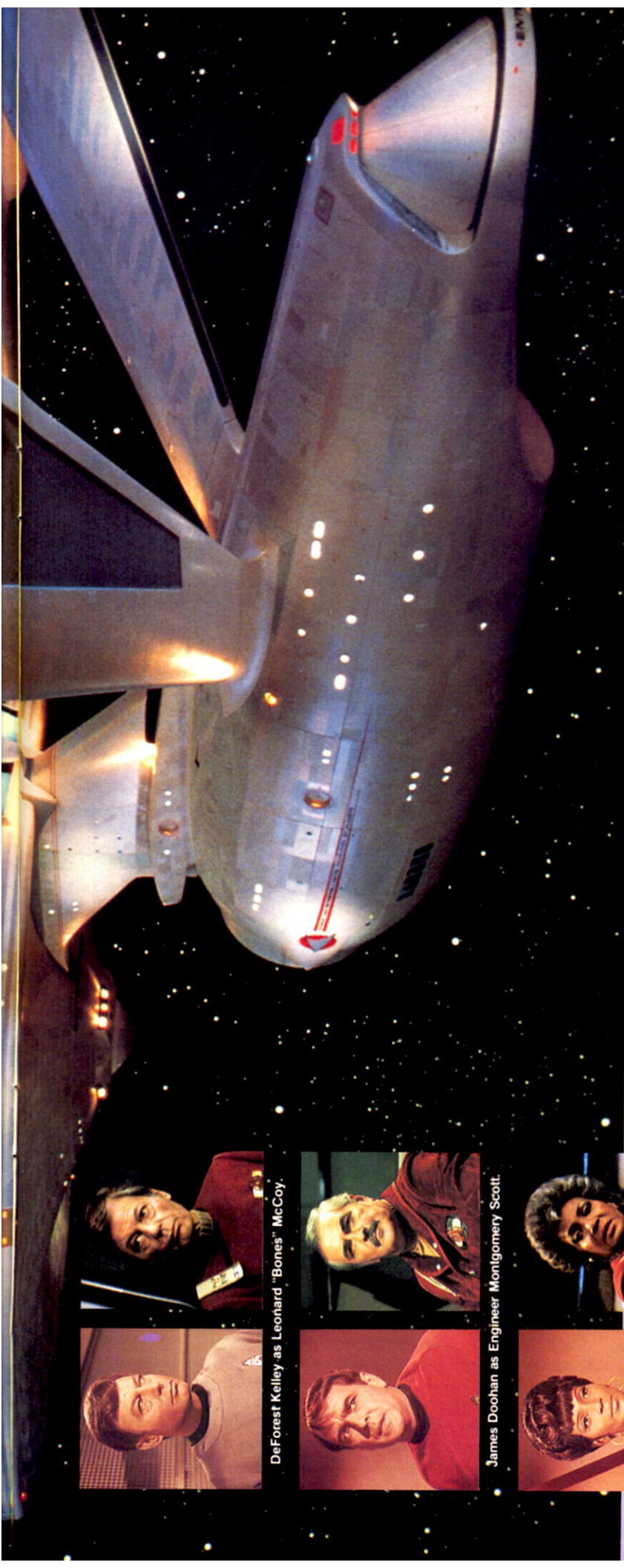


William Shatner as Captain James T. Kirk.



Leonard Nimoy as the Vulcan, Mr. Spock.





DeForest Kelley as Leonard "Bones" McCoy.



James Doohan as Engineer Montgomery Scott.



Nichelle Nichols as Uhura, Communications.



George Takei as Mr. Sulu, Helmsman.



Walter Koenig as Ensign Chekov, Navigator.



By Thomas Doherty

In syndication, theatrical distribution, prime time, and the animal memory of American culture, the five-year voyage of the starship Enterprise has stretched to a full quarter century. Televisually speaking, producer-creator-*auteur* Gene Roddenberry has sired more science fiction progeny than H.G. Wells, Jules Verne and Roger Corman combined. Limited only by the imagination of L.A. scenarists and the budget of the effects crew, his supple never-quite-final frontier seems capable of metastasizing an infinite galaxy of serial narratives.

Like ancient Gaul and the Holy Trinity, the **STAR TREK** mythos is a mystical union of three distinct yet interwoven

parts (let's just ignore the mercifully short-lived cartoon series): the generative presence of the original **STAR TREK**, 1966-69 (Classic Trek), the feature length motion pictures **STAR TREK I** through **V**, made in 1979, '82, '84, '86 and '89 (Celluloid Trek), and **STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION**, 1987-present (New Trek). The triad has blended into one matrix of narrative experience, a mind-meld cemented by the consistent retrospective glance of New and Celluloid Trek to the backstory of Classic Trek. Looking forward, **STAR TREK VI**, out in December, will connect Classic to New and thereby set up a next generation of feature-length motion pictures.

After two decades, Classic Trek has become more than

another syndication evergreen with cast and catchphrases known to any sentient channel surfer. It is an American cultural legacy. Think about it: NASA actually christened a spacecraft in tribute to the Enterprise, an honor yet to be bestowed upon **GILLIGAN'S ISLAND** or **THE BRADY BUNCH**. Unchangeable and omnipresent, Classic Trek is engraved in the video firmament, forever young in features, trim in waistline, and cheery in effects. Despite regular descents into godawful dialogue, cruise control plotting and voracious scenery chewing, a lot of interesting and endearing things happened on that venerable plywood deck. In retrospect, it had the one requisite quality of any classic: it didn't know it was a classic at

The U.S.S. Enterprise, outfitted for its first movie voyage in 1979 by ILM. The cast hasn't aged as well. Compare the heroes of the '60s NBC show to their appearance in the movie series, set to end with **STAR TREK VI** in December.

Gene Roddenberry, **STAR TREK**'s "great bird of the galaxy," created the show, which debuted September 1966.



the time.

Celluloid Trek is a mixed and mixed-up bag. Overblown and cluttered, restrained by the need to push all the cutesy generic buttons for the true believers, the Roman numeral series was both scooped and saved by the impact of George Lucas' STAR WARS, the success of which finally got Roddenberry's long-rumored high concept off the ground. In a space that was widescreen and big-budgeted, Celluloid Trek had trouble standing up to high definition examination. Bracketing the motion picture versions, the languorous TREK I and the hypertheological TREK V are the weakest entries. TREK II and III comprise a solid couplet, though shameless in the use of a cliffhanger involving the death of Spock. Only TREK IV, laced with whales and wit, orchestrated the easy character humor and airy fantasy of small-screen TREK into top-of-the-line big screen entertainment.

Commercial exigencies and the physical deterioration of the old crew (infirm ensigns, matronly communications officers and sumo-sized engineers) dictated a new development package. Met with faint hopes and skepticism, THE NEXT GENERATION looked at first like second-raters and wannabes. Burdened by loyalty to the old tropes, New Trek

Uhura, restrained by space babes Angelique Pettyjohn and Jane Ross in "The Gamesters of Triskellion."



TREK'S GENERATION GAP

“Where Kirk settled disputes through force of arms, Picard negotiates, wheedles and reaches reasonable accommodations. Kirk was a crusading knight; Picard is an ambassador with portfolio.”



Like television's New Trek, Classic Trek was relentlessly present-minded, seeped in '60s liberalism, like Kirk's encounter with hippies in "Way to Eden."

took two full seasons before finding its own style, voice and themes. Its task was always to live down a legacy not to live up to it. This it has done. Four years on, the sequel series has produced more episodes than the original and become a hot syndication item in its own right. What has also happened lately, and what few anticipated (surely not myself), was that the once self-conscious and timorous spawn would not simply bear favorable comparison with its inspiration but loom to surpass it in popularity, inventiveness and fan affection. Part of this may be an any-port-in-a-storm phenomenon, desperate zealots glomming gratefully onto any new TREK-thick input. Still, when the new cast started edging out the oldsters on the convention circuit, a space change in sensibility was in the works.

Taken together, the three-headed TREK hydra occupies a unique place in popcult lore with a hammerlock on the science fiction territory. Ironically, Roddenberry seized the future by excavating the past. The former WWII bomber pilot transferred the maleable mythos of "the Good War" to the Vietnam era and beyond.

The war-born elements have struck a resonant chord with successive generations: the sturdy vessel (read: Flying Fortress), the Federation (Allies), the multi-ethnic crew (Americans All), the nefarious Klingon enemy (Japanese/Red Chinese), and the faith in American might and morality (recite the opening: "To boldly go—"). Over the years, like any genre, innovation and convention, permanence and time-bound topicality, struggle for equipoise. Among the adaptable TREK tropes:

The Enterprise's Enterprise: The voyages of Classic Trek were a thinly disguised allegory for Kennedy-Johnson era foreign policy. No one questioned the righteous enterprise of the Enterprise: the projection outward of American power and the transmission of democratic liberalism to alien cultures. Besides bringing sexual satisfaction to space babes, Kirk was an envoy for postwar containment policy and interventionism. Born meddlers, Kirk and crew violated the Federation's non-interference directive with cavalier wantonness.

Once burnt and twice learnt, the post-Nam, post-Nixon New Trek is more likely to

hyperspace out of foreign entanglements than beam down into a quagmire in some god-forsaken planet. Reluctant to draw value judgments, the '80s show respects alien customs, nods tolerantly with secular humanist understanding, and accelerates into warp drive when things get sticky. Picard stretches the boundaries of the non-interference directive but he never approaches Kirk's wholesale disregard of it. Where Kirk settles disputes through force of arms (often *mano a mano*), Picard negotiates, wheedles, talks, discusses and reaches reasonable accommodations. Some of the old buttinsky faith endures, mainly because the projection of military power is embedded into the very boldly-going premise. But notice how Picard always seems to be chauffeuring around delegates for treaty negotiations and adjudicating alien courtroom dramas. Kirk was a crusading knight; Picard is ambassador with portfolio.

Aliens and Allegory: Like all futuristic science fiction, the three faces of TREK are each relentlessly present-minded. Sixties liberalism seeped into Classic Trek in the figure of racist aliens and, most notoriously, in the justification of American involvement in Vietnam in the "Private Little War" episode (where Kirk deploys realpolitik to arm the guerrilla warriors of an alien planet). Though less polemically minded, Celluloid Trek called for nuclear freeze zones and embraced ecological correctness in the save-the-whales TREK IV. However, New Trek is most consistently conscious of its consciousness-raising responsibilities. Its episodes comprise an index of hot-button items in late-'80s progressive political discourse: ecology, arms negotiation, feminism, abortion, euthanasia, free speech, sexuality. The New Age sensitivity and California squeamishness gets a bit much (all those weepy talks with Whoopi down in the therapy lounge), but lately the tentatiousness and speechifying has let up. Beginning in the third season, the show became more playful and risk-taking: Riker forced into sexual per-

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STAR TREK

THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY

GENE RODDENBERRY, PHILOSOPHER, JUNIOR GRADE

The creator pontificates from on high about setting the Trek universe in motion, wondering where it's all headed?

By Sheldon Teitelbaum

The man is not well. I am told Gene Roddenberry, STAR TREK's creator, has suffered a small stroke. There are other infirmities. He gets about with a cane, wheelchair, and the big yellow limo that alerts the people at Paramount to his arrival. He has a driver named Ernie Over, who wears a suit and a western tie. Over escorts him everywhere, including through the expanses of his Bel Air home. For someone who once piloted a jet for Pan Am until he crash-landed in Syria, who roared through the Hollywood Hills on a Harley and roamed the galaxy on a starship, the '90s are a mixed bag.

After two decades spent securing his claim as a pop icon alternately ignored and revered, the man is finally getting some recognition. They are naming a building for him at Paramount. He is finally making the opulent living one would have imagined for him 25 years ago. His wife, Majel Barrett, is as adept at taking care of business, I hear, as she is of him.

He's got a coffee table book commemorating the 25th Anniversary of his brainchild which hit stores in September. His quotes, I am told, are in bold-face. Why not? To the others now charged with managing the day-to-day operation of his franchise, it's a business. For the erstwhile "Great Bird of the Galaxy," STAR TREK is a life. "I am an old fart," he says. But he doesn't really believe it.

Gene Roddenberry's life



Roddenberry in 1979, with William Shatner, DeForest Kelley and Leonard Nimoy on the set of the first STAR TREK movie, a curtain to be rung down in December.

began in Texas during the Great Depression. To understand STAR TREK, and to fathom the depth of Roddenberry's oft-ridiculed faith—ironic given his present circumstances—in a better future, you have to understand the effect that searing economic event had on a child growing up during the '30s.

For Americans, this was the last true Holocaust. It endowed most who endured it as adults

with bitter pessimism. Many who lived it as children, however, became optimists. Roddenberry's optimism was hardcore. Though by no means graced with fortune, his father, a cavalry officer stationed at Fort Bliss, spared his family the decade's worst degradation. Who could know that his child's rosy-eyed vision of things to come would run rampant, three decades later, in a TV show that would rocket

around the world.

"My father would take me outside and say 'Gene, all this won't be here 50 years from now. A big hunk of the city won't be here.'

"Dad always assumed we could—and would—do things better. You could hardly have been children of the Depression without thinking things could be better. This is why SF appealed to so many people who grew up then. We didn't believe it was going to be the same old world. Ours would be one without munitions manufacturers and armies. We would be taking care of all the problems we have today."

The affliction, however, was not strictly Roddenberry's. It is impossible to imagine his career had he been raised in France, Poland or Israel. Wide-eyed exuberance doesn't play in those places. It doesn't even occur to those who live there. Roddenberry and STAR TREK are strictly American phenomena: dreams from an American dreamer.

How did you get started in this business?

I was a hot-free lance writer before I ever thought of STAR TREK. Years ago, I was the head writer of HAVE GUN, WILL TRAVEL. It was sort of an SF credit—Palladin was as close to being SF as you could get. [Richard] Boone was a marvelous person as actors go. I was a policeman and learned to write as a speechwriter for [LAPD chief] William H. Parker. I learned to write long

before that, though, with the idea that if you write 800 words a day, soon you will be a writer. It took me eight years or so. Once I quit Pan American [as a pilot], it seemed to me that, yes, I'm a writer, whether people believe that or not.

Did you miss flying?

Being a pilot is taking off from strange airports and countries and not sleeping regularly. It's good if you want to build an image. Nice to drop in on a cocktail party and say, "Ah, yes, London, I was there two days ago," or even more exotic places. But writing is an exciting life. It introduces you constantly to new subjects and makes you think in new and different ways. I'd like my son to be a writer. He won't, particularly since I have suggested it.

You seem to regard writing more as an opportunity to get educated than to assert your beliefs.

I can say for 25 years I've been growing. The variety of subjects we've attacked on STAR TREK really has been as close to a school of philosophy as I can think. The subjects are a variety that men should address themselves to. I think by coming into TREK and pushing myself into these molds, I've forced myself to attack a variety of subjects. You can hardly name a major subject we haven't done a show on. I finally feel I have become

With story editor Ron Moore on the bridge of *THE NEXT GENERATION*, eclipsing the popularity of the original.



STAR TREK PHILOSOPHER

“I can say for 25 years I've been growing. I finally feel I've become a philosopher, junior grade. You can hardly name a major subject I haven't spent time thinking out a show on.”



Roddenberry with series regulars James Doohan and George Takei, inspecting the Enterprise rebuilt by Paramount in 1979 to cash-in on the success of STAR WARS.

a philosopher, junior grade. There's hardly a subject you could mention I haven't spent time thinking out because of the need to set a script in a strange world on that subject. You need to go to the roots. Would the Klingons be happy with that kind of government or philosophy? You spend years dreaming them up, and they begin to build up into a rather real thing.

How real?

I don't for a moment think they are real subjects, but they have a reality for me. I take the fact of their fictional existence very seriously. If I am going to write something about them, and they are going to be seen by Arthur C. Clarke or Ray Bradbury, people I love and respect, I have to pretend that they are real, and that this is serious.

How did you develop the idea for the original STAR TREK series?

It came about very slowly, as everyone who was with me at the time can testify. I was so tired of writing about what I considered nothing. I was tired of writing for shows where there was always a shoot-out in the last act and somebody was killed. I do not consider that the "ending" of anything. I

would watch a whole show in those early days and, at the end, would feel like I had wasted time on nonsense. STAR TREK was formulated to change that.

What direction would you like to see THE NEXT GENERATION head into?

I am the moving force behind the show, that's true. But, I do have a lot of lovely people who keep coming up with good ideas for the show, too. I would like STAR TREK to continue to go in the direction we have been heading—the direction of people-centered storylines. With the main emphasis on humanity—that is, people who are going to go out there and change things, and not machines. Machines will be a wonderful help. But, it is the people who run them who will dominate. As long as I am with STAR TREK, the focus will always be on the people.

How involved are you in the current series?

There are many stories, rewrites written by other people, and I just hover in the background to make sure it fits with my imagined reality on several key points. I have marvelous people, among them [executive producer] Rick Berman,

and I thank God he walked into the office.

How involved were you in the daily business of the original series?

I was very involved when we dreamed up the first series. I knew Kirk and Spock before anyone else knew them. It's true in the writing game that as the years went by and other people put their imprimatur on the show, I had to sit back and loosen up my parameters. I am not going to turn down great things that other people and actors think of. Their imaginings press you further back into a supervisory role.

I finally cut loose and thought I was through with STAR TREK. You can only stand so much of seven characters. I was reasonably sure I'd not get so involved again. Paramount thought otherwise, and I said, "No, you cannot pay me enough. I have a little nest egg, and there's nothing new and fresh in what you're proposing." This was seven years after the original series ended. I knew I'd been caught when Paramount said, "Suppose you're the boss?" Initially I was always having it out with network VPs. And I don't embitter easily. I was involved in the first movie, but never deeply.

So why the appeal of doing THE NEXT GENERATION? Why hadn't you been more deeply involved in making the features?

I guess I was reaching my majority—I said, "Fuck 'em—these people don't know as much about STAR TREK as me." You can't work full-time on the movies and on a TV series. And I'd rather do TV. I'm a creative person and don't need to write something, and under Hollywood's present way of doing things, you have a director do a show his way. Some of that happened in STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE. I saw then I didn't care for the arrangement. I thought it was a good movie, and that it went downhill until STAR TREK IV.

Did you have any input?

By contract they [Paramount] couldn't do them if I said that's not TREK, and I used my veto sparingly. STAR TREK V I would not have done that way. I suggested the



On the set of STAR TREK III (1984) with the movie cast and (l to r) producer Harve Bennett, executive producer Gary Nardino, director Leonard Nimoy, and Roddenberry.

idea that saved it in a small way—let what they find be a powerful alien who thought it was God. Originally the alien was God, a very bad idea. I came within an inch of telling Paramount I wouldn't make V. No one person made it terrible, and no one wanted it to be terrible.

What was your problem with producer Harve Bennett's idea to make STAR TREK VI a prequel?

I didn't like it. Who was going to cast the new Kirk and Spock? No one has ever cast a TREK character besides me that's worked. Braggadocio or whatever, that is the history of TREK. I could have done so had I thought it was a good idea, but it didn't fit in with the rest of TREK. It wasn't good. Some of it was like Police Academy. You could hardly do this without the magic of a group of characters tailored for STAR TREK, which this was not.

And yet you cast the second series. Why not a movie?

I didn't want to do it again. The second series, oh, Jesus,

was it hard! They said do a series but find a way to do Kirk and Spock, and I said, "Absolutely no." And I'm sitting in my office putting together characters, and the fans are saying without Kirk and Spock you won't have me. I finally decided we needed new characters, a new crew, that our production crew could regard as theirs. You can see that pride in them today. So I had to have new characters and new underpinnings. That seemed so simplistic at first. Have the Captain go down on missions? No, that's not the way it would be. Gene Roddenberry had grown an extra 25 years.

Someone suggested to me that THE NEXT GENERATION was your vindication for having been kept at arm's length from the films and the latter two-thirds of the original series.

The revival of THE NEXT GENERATION had no emotional import for me. I don't live from despair to vindication. I never say it's just a TV show because it was once my center of concentration.

What do you recall of the four or so months after you got the go-ahead from Paramount for the new series? Why did you choose the people you did?

I brought in people like [writer David] Gerrold and [D. C.] Fontana because I knew them. But eventually we ended up with a new show and a new group. Some, like [producer] Bob Justman, who has been with me since day one, suggested Picard's identity. He had gone to UCLA and had seen this man he wanted as Picard. He presented him to me, and my first reaction was, "Jesus Christ, Bob. I don't want a bald man." In his wisdom, Justman kept his mouth shut and let me grow accustomed to him.

Why did you put out the word that you weren't terribly interested in having science fiction writers write for the show?

In the eighteen years since we had done TREK, the writers have been living a life, and there wasn't room in this to have them go back to square one. The newer people we have acquired in the job of imagin-

ing things were the right people. Some of our best scripts were done by non-science fiction writers. You don't need a good science fiction writer to write good science fiction—you need a good writer. Is he a writer? Does he or she have the boldness, the imagination? You don't need someone who has actually written science fiction. I never did.

Is STAR TREK actually science fiction, or has it become something in its own right.

I think TREK is science fiction, but a brand of science fiction. STAR TREK will always work as long as you have imagination. We have never had anyone in TREK who wasn't into growth. During my first TREK, for instance, I didn't pay any attention to women. In the years I have grown into something of a strong feminist. I was the product of a southern family background. My parents never spoke of any race with contempt. They encouraged me to try strange ideas and philosophies. I never grew up with any-

thing but great curiosity about aliens.

Why have you insisted that the characters in THE NEXT GENERATION always get on famously? Didn't you realize the constraints this would place on you writers?

Yes, it can tie your hands, but I saw it was necessary. You can hardly have people from this ideal world with the same smallness people have today. We have no violence. Our people don't allow it, which sounds like death in a series. People have learned to live with hatred. Our people get along beautifully, but have you ever heard that THE NEXT GENERATION goes slowly?

Actually, yes. The series sometimes seems a bit short on passion.

In their future, they've learned to accept we are all creatures of passion. But they have evolved into people who can live with each other, which we are trying to do today. Perhaps there are things that can't be solved with a shootout in the last act. There's excitement and challenge in life without those things.

And yet we've just been involved in a shoot 'em up in Iraq. Will we see these events reflected in some way on THE NEXT GENERATION?

I wish this war hadn't happened, that people didn't die. I am as much moved by Saddam's people dying as by ours. I am helped in that I don't consider this as a divided world. I am very fond of humans. I believe from a combination of what I have seen and heard about Saddam that he is a bad man, but I have believed that before without it being true. War isn't just. You may go to war to protect yourself. Iraq pushed awfully close some-

Barrett with Leonard Nimoy in 1964, as "Number One" in the original pilot for STAR TREK, rejected by NBC.



CULTIVATING NEW TREK

"I don't think I have the perfect solution for everything. There is so much in the show's fourth year that I never dreamed of. It's because very bright people carved something out of it."



Roddenberry with wife Majel Barrett, as Nurse Christine Chapel in the movies, a role she created on the original series after being dropped by NBC from the pilot.

times. It's more difficult to relate to the war in this series. We do in an episode in which everybody says you must go to war and kill to protect this and this. I think you'll know what the answers are—look at [fourth season] "The Wounded." I've found STAR TREK to be a voice of sanity in that regard.

In fact, I recollect one of your cast members from the original series suggesting a STAR TREK peace mission to troubled spots on this planet.

I think it's a remarkable comment on STAR TREK that one of the actors, after 25 years, could believe it was possible to lead a TREK peace mission. By the time you sign up for indoctrination in STAR TREK, you get indoctrinated.

Is something inherently cultish in the TREK format?

I don't permit the cultish aspects of TREK to become a concern. I have heard great arguments among fans, but I have kept STAR TREK pretty much my own. Kirk or Picard is not going to do something that I disagree with, so they can argue till they are blue in the face. I thank people who think passionately enough about TREK to form cults. If TREK were just a blah series with no

meaning, they would not be. But it's not a movement. I don't like to think I have the perfect solution to everything.

How do you recall your struggles with writers during THE NEXT GENERATION's first season?

In the first year you need someone who will unerringly write the character data that I want to write. I wrote or rewrote the first fourteen scripts so the Captain and all the people in the show would be the images of the people I wanted to carry on. With the mold cut, I certainly don't think of the best way of doing everything. I let the new writers come in and say, 'Gee, that writer saw something exciting.'

There is so much in the show's fourth year that I never dreamed of. It's because very bright people have carved something out of it. If there is a facet of my character, it is that I think humans are exciting and interesting child creatures. The problems with the Writer's Guild [first season] weren't serious. The problems were more with writers. Maybe if I were a director it would have been easier, but to have yourself rewritten by a fellow writer! There were a lot of

bloody noses and I received some punches, but I'm a stubborn person, and the dust is all settled now. It is possible for us to improve our show, our writers to use their brainpower to create shocking things.

What are your future plans for THE NEXT GENERATION and the movie series?

This [STAR TREK VI] will be the last STAR TREK movie with the original cast. The next movie, if there is one, will probably be with the present series cast. We might introduce a new cast about every six years. We will also introduce new characters into the series as we go along who might replace present members as they move on. Denise Crosby returned in another role in the series, as a Romulan. There are many possibilities. We hope to keep the production value up on the series and hopefully carry that over into the movies.

Whither Gene Roddenberry?

I don't know. My grandmother, who guided an early part of my life, said keep yourself pure—what she meant was more than just Baptist purity—and good things will come your way. You just sit and wait and pick them as they come. I don't worry about it. I'm not ready to die, but that hasn't troubled me since I was 45.

You will likely be remembered for STAR TREK. Is that enough for you?

To anyone acquainted with the variety of things I am proud of, subjects if approached on the Broadway stage or in a serious movie people will laud, can be found in the new show. I think STAR TREK has always been a slow bloomer. The mass audience is only slowly becoming aware of the new show.

Do you believe that TREK can endure?

Well, I'd be very surprised if in two or three years they are not working on a feature, probably after the show stops running. We are guilty of strange feelings of TV not interfering with movies. Some years after the features I can see a new TV series too. Unless someone botches it up by saying the Enterprise is a war ship and there are dirty, rotten people out there. I think someone will make it into something I can be satisfied with. □



STAR TREK

THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY

The Enterprise, brought out of mothballs one time too many in *STAR TREK V* (1990), the disastrous movie entry directed by William Shatner that almost tempted Paramount to call it quits.

HARVE BENNETT, MOVIE PARADISE LOST

The producer who tended Paramount's movie final frontier on why he parted ways with Roddenberry and the studio.

By Sheldon Teitelbaum

The Starship Enterprise's registry plate hangs on the wall over Harve Bennett's wet bar. It is one of the few *STAR TREK* mementos on display in the producer's Brentwood green-hued living room. On one mantle sits the Emmy he received for *GOLDA*, the made-for-TV movie about the life and times of the late Israeli premier Golda Meir.

After ten years invested in four fairly solid *STAR TREK* movies made for Paramount (grossing an average of \$80 million apiece), Bennett's regard for *TREK* is now ambivalent. Bennett, sixty, pulled out of the *TREK* business last year when the jittery studio, at the urging of Gene Roddenberry, the "classic" cast and a hard core of irate fans, reneged on its commitment to have him produce a prequel to the film series.

Bennett had been asked to

prepare the prequel when *STAR TREK V: THE FINAL FRONTIER*, a film he had produced despite misgivings about its story and the competence of its director—and which opened to poor critical and boxoffice reception—called into doubt the continued reliability of the major "tentpole"—propping up Paramount Pictures.

"We did the best we could on

V," recalled Bennett, "and when it was over, I went to see Ned Tanen, who was the last of the decisive people at Paramount before the bean counters took over, and he said, 'Well, are we going to do another one?' I said it was time to do the prequel, and he said, 'Do it.' It was later that everybody else asked for long meetings."

The prequel was written by

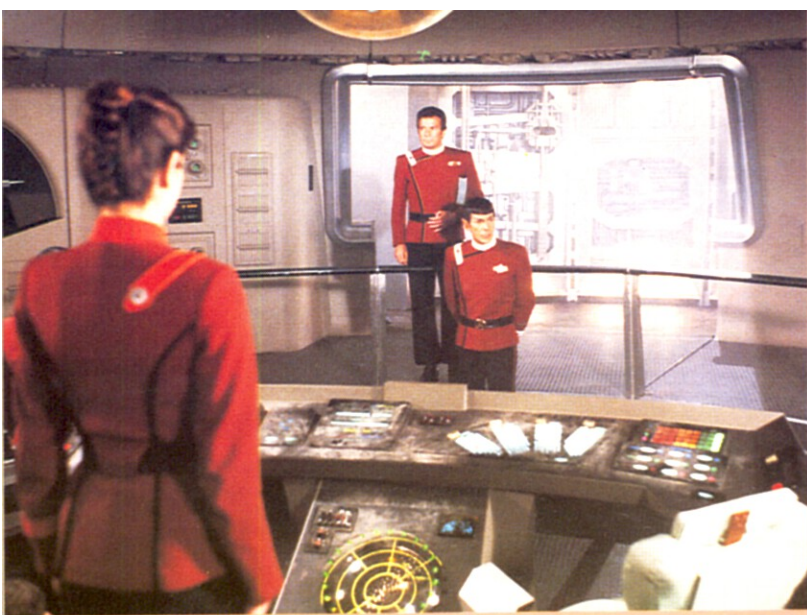
Bennett confers with Shatner during the filming of *STAR TREK III* in 1984.



David Loughery (co-writer of *STAR TREK V*), in close collaboration with Bennett. It would have centered on the Starfleet Academy heydays of a young Kirk, Spock and McCoy. Spock is estranged from his parents, and becomes the first Vulcan to attend the Academy. Kirk is "a crazy hot-shot, flying through haystacks on his Iowa farm." And Bones, a substantially more senior thirty year-old, attends because, having assisted his terminally ill father in dying, he finds his own life bereft of meaning.

"Our model, or mockup," said Bennett, "was *THE SANTA FE TRAIL*, a Warner Bros movie made in 1940 about John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry." The film starred Errol Flynn, Olivia de Havilland, Ramond Massey, Ronald Reagan, and Alan Hale and was directed by Michael Curtiz.

The classic film, noted Bennett, would have served inspi-



Kirstie Alley as Saavik with Shatner and Nimoy in *STAR TREK II* (1982), the sequel given a nautical, military action spin by Bennett to shore up the sagging franchise.

A STAR TREK VI TOO FAR

“Ned Tanen was the last of the decisive people at Paramount before the bean counters took over. It was time to do the prequel and he said, ‘Do it.’ Everybody else asked for long meetings.”

rationally, rather than as a blueprint for the TREK prequel. Like *THE SANTA FE TRAIL*, *STAR TREK VI* would have functioned, said Bennett, as the gathering point of famous TREK faces during their academy years. The western had focused on a group of West Point cadets in 1859, including George Armstrong Custer, and Robert E. Lee.

One facet of the western echoed in the prequel, said Bennett, was its preoccupation with matters of race and the issue of slavery. In the prequel, a new struggle against slavery is being mounted elsewhere in the galaxy. In a strange way, noted Bennett, his story served as an honorarium to Roddenberry, who had dared to tackle such problems as racism before it was the place of television to do so. But neither Roddenberry nor the management at Paramount felt honored by the idea. And Roddenberry, said Bennett, was too sanctimonious to recognize the recurring themes of his own early passion.

“We gave Kirk a genuine love affair with an eighteen year-old, her first,” said Bennett. “A lady cadet, she is hard to come by, and when she goes, she goes. The girl dies heroically. Kirk, insane with grief, performs his first heroic act against all odds. And Spock saves the day in a struggle with racist overtones, getting the medal of honor.”

The prequel’s purpose, apart from sheer storytelling, was three-fold: in Bennett’s estimation, it would have enabled

Paramount to dispense with the increasingly hoary and prohibitively expensive triumvirate of William Shatner (\$4 million a film), Leonard Nimoy (ditto) and DeForest Kelley (\$500,000), not to mention the supporting cast members Shatner reportedly characterized as “The Seven Dwarves,” each now earning approximately \$125,000 a production. It could also have introduced a new cast of unknowns, who, had they kindled the proper chemistry, might have reinvigorated a series perhaps otherwise destined for the dustbin. But equally important, from Bennett’s vantage point, it would also have preserved a better launching pad for another *STAR TREK* with the original cast. It was the concept of the Enterprise in an ongoing mission that actually resounds as the last thought of the film.

“It would have cost \$27 million [*STAR TREK V* cost \$35 million] and Paramount would have been left with the choice of doing another movie with the young kids or ‘The Over-the-Hill Gang Returns to Save the Galaxy.’” said Bennett, who reportedly was to make his directing debut on the project.

Bennett said he tried to allay the studio’s fears that a TREK movie without the so-called “Big Three” would bomb. He even suggested framing the movie with Shatner and Nimoy by having them flash back to their halcyon days while on a visit to Starfleet Academy. “Bill [Shatner] is the featured

speaker at an Academy graduation ceremony,” recalled Bennett, “and he is looking tired. He is also considering a teaching appointment. The kids ask him what it was really like when he attended the Academy, and what Spock was like then, and the story he tells the cadets is the film. The prequel story ends over the grave of his lost love, giving us some insight into why Kirk never falls in love again for the rest of the *STAR TREK* series.

“At the end of the film, while contemplating her passing, Spock beams down and asks him if he’s going into teaching or back to the ship. They have a sentimental exchange, and Bill says, ‘Beam me up.’”

Unfortunately, with the resignation of Paramount president Ned Tanen, Bennett found himself without the backing to press his prequel through the system. Instead, he was asked by Paramount to produce a more conventional movie with the old cast in time for *STAR TREK*’s Silver Anniversary this year. Such a film held little challenge or magic for Bennett, however, and despite the offer of what he described as an enormous sum of money, Bennett declined, choosing to leave Paramount rather than seek an extension

of his contract with the studio. “I have a reputation for saying the emperor has no clothes, though in a gentle way,” said Bennett. “I stand quietly on my principles. One can do so and prosper, but I think I was kidding myself after these last two years on *STAR TREK*.”

Ralph Winter, Bennett’s close production associate on the film series, stayed on, and Nicholas Meyer was recruited to write and direct *STAR TREK VI*, which began production last April, featuring all of the classic cast. Paramount plans to open the film in December, still taking advantage of *STAR TREK*’s anniversary hoopla. According to Bennett, the script strongly suggests that this will be the final film featuring the old cast.

Bennett acknowledged that his impromptu departure from the *STAR TREK* universe took some getting used to. In his own eyes—and in the eyes of others in the industry, he had clearly become associated with *STAR TREK*. “It was like a badge,” he said, “and without it, some people no longer know what to make of me.” The Chicago native, who broke into show business during the ‘40s as a radio “Quiz Kid,” is hard at work on a new feature script. And he is being wooed by his

Happier times, on the set of *STAR TREK IV* (1986), the most successful of the movie series, (l to r) Shatner, Nimoy, Roddenberry, Bennett and Nichelle Nichols.



alma mater, ABC, which wants him to make some made-for-TV movies and perhaps take over a series or two.

Bennett came to the TREK franchise in 1980, after producing such hit shows as THE MOD SQUAD, SIX MILLION DOLLAR MAN and THE BIONIC WOMAN. Bennett also produced RICH MAN, POOR MAN, the world's first miniseries, and FROM HERE TO ETERNITY, which he remains proud of. Bennett was brought into TREK's inner sanctum by Paramount TV chief Gary Nardino, in a meeting with then Paramount chairman Barry Diller. Diller had, in fact, been Bennett's assistant at ABC. Also present were fellow ABC alumni Michael Eisner and Charles Bludhorn, the Austrian immigrant who built Gulf & Western, Paramount's parent company, and who, said Bennett, "resembled more than anyone I've met in my time the mogul image."

Bludhorn asked Bennett what he thought of STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE and Bennett told him. "I said it was boring," recalled Bennett. "Bludhorn turned to Eisner and Diller and said, 'Aha! By you guys bald is sexy!' [A reference to actress Persis Khambatta, as Ilia.] To me, he said, 'Do you think you can make a better movie than that?' I said, 'Yeah, I could.' He said, 'For less than \$45 fucking million?'"

"'Oh,' I said, 'Where I come from I can make a lot of movies for that.'"

Much has been made about how Paramount cut the cost of making STAR TREK pictures by turning the task over to its TV division. Bennett said that in reality, this was an exercise in meaningless semantics. "It was a smokescreen to indicate that people shouldn't spend a lot of money," said Bennett. "It meant nothing. There comes a time where belts get tightened and everyone gets fired, and people are gone, and we want to make films for less. 1980 was a time of pullback. The idea we had was if STAR TREK II was presented as a TV movie, no one out there selling services would get the idea that there were unlimited funds to make a gigantic



Charles Bludhorn, the mogul who ran Gulf & Western, Paramount's parent company, didn't think "bald was sexy" (Persis Khambatta as Ilia), and brought in Bennett to fix the franchise after the failure of STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE (1979).

movie. STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE had cost \$40 million, and people thought we were throwing money at this thing. The handshake we had was if it's a good script and a good picture, Paramount would make it for the big screen."

Bennett took on STAR TREK II with little knowledge of the franchise. In fact, THE MOD SQUAD had run against STAR TREK until the latter was banished to Friday nights at 10 p. m., where it languished and ultimately died during its third season. "I was too busy watching my own show to watch theirs," said Bennett. "I ran all the episodes and let it roll over me. What I saw that I liked were the relationships between the three men, and the sense of male bonding and family and the ethics, the morality—though there are times and episodes, and I can't trace who is responsible, when TREK was as kinky a show as ever came down the pike. It was Grand Guignol. They had Kirk play an entire episode as a woman."

"Credit for the success of the show, of course, goes to Gene Roddenberry. There's no disputing his genius. But it also goes to Gene Coon, the hard-headed re-writer who made a lot of things work. I think of myself, sometimes, as the Gene Coon of the feature movies. Fandom never understood the

contribution Coon made, notwithstanding Roddenberry's genius. It's my gut feeling, knowing all the players and the material, that whenever the name Gene Coon is on an episode as a producer, they are generally the best shows."



Although Bennett sat through many episodes of the old series, he found himself stumped for a story for three or four months. He knew only that he didn't like Roddenberry's idea, which was to have the Enterprise travel back in time to become involved in the Kennedy assassination. "It had the same problem that Shatner's story did on V, which is that you know you're not actually going to meet God, and you know you aren't going to stop Oswald's bullets, so why bother?"

"'Space Seed' kept haunting me. I thought it was fabulous. It was performance. I had seen [Ricardo] Montalban when I was a little boy, while visiting a sound stage at MGM, and he was doing his first dance with Cyd Charisse. I was there to interview him as a Quiz Kid reporter. He always fascinated me. And 'Space Seed' spoke to me. I decided we had to bring him back, and I called Ricardo, who was in the midst of shooting FANTASY ISLAND. We

had lunch and he was charming. 'You write *these* for me!' he said in that wonderful accent—I mean, the guy went to school at Fairfax High."

Bennett said he turned to David Gerrold, D.C. Fontana and various other writers who had worked on the old show. He found them too strong-willed and dogmatic. "The Hollywood screenwriter has traditionally been the victim of interceders from above. When I was a producer, I was sensitive to that because I was always writing. I do understand what that means. Good writers understand that the nature of screenwriting is the nature of architecture. The good architect understands he must take into account the desires of the client, the terrain, and all the other external factors. It is not just that I am going to write the great American classic because there is only me and the audience. There are also 200 people who intervene, all of whom want to be fathers of success. It is a truly cooperative committee, and it must be managed. Producers and directors are the managers."

"But STAR TREK writers came in with supreme egos. I had worked with many of them before and found them, like most science fiction writers, very unyielding to comment. Harlan [Ellison] was in a class by himself. He gave me an out-

line on THE MOD SQUAD that would have cost \$20 million to produce. When I asked him to think reasonably, he responded as if I were questioning Allah. I worked with D. C. Fontana on SIX MILLION DOLLAR MAN and had a similar experience. I said, 'Hey, we're not doing Chekov here.'

"There is a great difficulty using the recognized science fiction writers: not just those we used on TREK, but those who have reputations, like [Isaac] Asimov. Their medium is like radio of the mind. Nick [Meyer] claims that when he taught a class at the University of Iowa, he ran an episode of MISSION IMPOSSIBLE without a soundtrack, and an episode of STAR TREK without the picture, thus proving that STAR TREK was a radio show. MISSION IMPOSSIBLE, on the other hand, was pure visual, and you could understand it without any audible context.

"As a child of radio, I have always been comfortable with that kind of material, so TREK was a natural home for me. I like to hear people talk. If I have a fault it's that my people talk too much.

"What I found that I loved, and still do, are these three people; Kirk, Spock and McCoy. STAR TREK purists always say Spock represents intellect, Bones passion and Kirk reconciliation. I think it's true. I also think—and this is where Nick [Meyer] and I part with Gene [Roddenberry]—that STAR TREK is a naval show; always was and always will be."

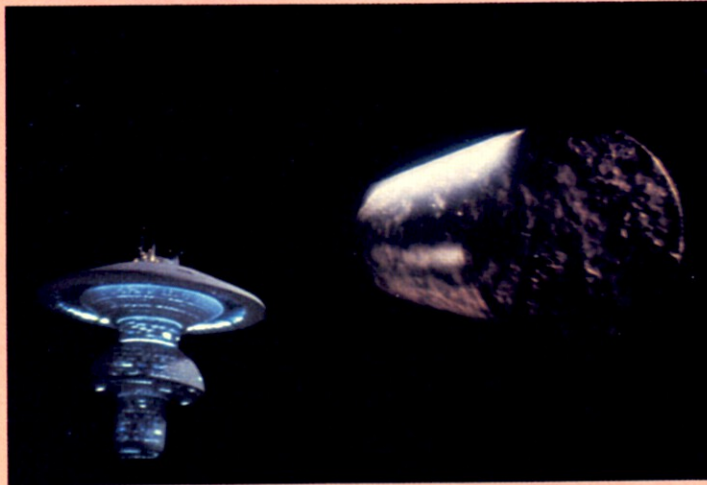
Bennett said that he only began to feel like a sharecropper on someone else's plantation toward the end of his involvement with the STAR

Bennett's viewscreen cameo in STAR TREK V, as the Jewish head of Star Fleet. Voted out of office by the fans.



PREQUEL VS. SEQUEL

"It would have cost \$27 million and Paramount would have been left with the choice of doing another movie with the young kids or 'The Over-the-Hill Gang Returns to Save the Galaxy.'"



The "save the whales" alien probe, courtesy of ILM, reaches Earth orbit in STAR TREK IV, Bennett's framing device, written in collaboration with Nicholas Meyer.

TREK features. During most of those years, however, he found TREK naively appealing. "It was very optimistic—and most STAR TREK fans will tell you that. If you look to its time, most of the science fiction which preceded it is gloom and doom, very paranoid. Look at Ray Bradbury's vision. Along comes Roddenberry, who has the good sense to say, 'I have the light, things are going to get better, people are going to be wonderful. We'll go to places you've never dreamed of, there's another West to be won.'

"Also, TREK has enormous snob appeal. It purports to be a program for the bright. If you watched TREK it was like going to a Mensa meeting. If you compare the shows of the '60s, as to intentions and content, a STAR TREK alongside a STARKY AND HUTCH or BONANZA, you have something that aspired to as high as TV would allow it to go. It was smart."

For Bennett, as indeed for many at Paramount, STAR TREK was a gold mine not yet fully explored. STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE, Bennett recalled, reminded him of a '30s picture in which

all the stars, male and female, were shot through gauze, because the studios wanted youth to remain young. But 1980 was not a romantic, expressionistic time for filmmaking.

"My first maxim was, for God's sake, act your age. I am the same age as Shatner, and was going through my own time of change. I wouldn't have dared trying to look like I was 25, and I was aware of how silly Bill looked radiating this gauzy look. Even Leonard had too much makeup—he had Lillian Gish lips. I decided STAR TREK II was going to be gritty, about people and how they cope with aging."

Where Bennett and Meyer differed, in fact, was over the issue of killing off Spock *permanently*. Meyer was determined to be rid of the green-blooded Vulcan. Bennett demurred for future pictures. "In STAR TREK II, we achieved theatricality by killing Spock. Nick wanted to move on to something else. We went to the mat only when I said that as keeper of the franchise, I have to give people an ambiguous hope. He said, 'No, the opera is over, the fat lady has sung, and Carmen is dead.'

"I think he was wrong. There wouldn't have been a STAR TREK III or IV, which were pretty good pictures—and IV was the best of them. I always saw a trilogy as I stumbled through THE WRATH OF KHAN. (It sounded like Chapter 13 of a Saturday serial). In hindsight, it was a trilogy. You saw people staggering out of II. You had really killed something, and there was a real chance there wouldn't be another STAR TREK because Spock was a secret weapon. He is the pivot, the true uniqueness of the show. It gave Leonard all his clout. Leonard was to STAR TREK what David McCallum was to THE MAN FROM UNCLE."

With the trilogy complete with STAR TREK IV, Bennett did not initially want to do a fifth film. Meyer had declined Paramount's invitation to work with Shatner on his God-debunking movie, and Bennett appeared inclined to follow suit. Shatner went to New York for lunch with best-selling novelist Eric Van Lustbader, who agreed to write a script for \$1 million. This was before Hollywood was in the habit of paying such sums for screenplays. Paramount said it wouldn't pay and Shatner threatened to bolt. It was at this juncture that Bennett was asked to climb aboard again.

"I was offered a lot of money to control Bill's appetites," said Bennett. "They were extravagant because he didn't know anything. He had spent all those years in front of the camera, and believed because he had directed T. J. HOOKER and Leonard had done it, he could too.

"The real problem with V, however, was that the premise was faulty. You pick up a TV Guide and you read the logline which says: Tonight on STAR TREK the crew goes to find God. Automatically, and unconsciously, you know they will not find God because no one has and no one will, and no one would be so arrogant to say what they're depicting on screen is actually God because others will say, 'No, it's not.' So we know we're going to face an anticlimax, a trick. The

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STAR TREK

THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY

A TREK CRUISE DOWN MEMORY LANE

The cast and crew hits the convention circuit to bridge the generations.

By Sue Uram

You're a STAR TREK fan. You've been to conventions and know the thrill of seeing your favorite characters in person. That's nothing compared to SeaTrek, the ultimate convention experience. Last May, 1,180 fans took a six-day Caribbean cruise with eighteen STAR TREK luminaries, including Gene Roddenberry. Paying more than \$1,000 apiece, the excursion netted Fantasy Cruises more than a cool million. STAR TREK is big business.

But no one complained of the exorbitant price tag. TREK fans are either an affluent bunch or think they know how to spend their money. When a cruise trader unveiled STAR TREK collector's plates by the Ernst company of Counselor Troi and Lt. Worf, the asking price was \$1,500 each—only six were ever made! Marina Sirtis, in attendance, was enraged and complained that she felt fans were being ripped-off, whereupon a fan from Canada plopped down \$3,000 and bought them both!

Roddenberry attended in a wheelchair with his wife Majel Barrett, accompanied by a nurse/therapist. Barrett revealed that her husband had had a series of small strokes and is a diabetic, which complicates his recovery. When Roddenberry tries to stand, his right foot turns inward. When Roddenberry began to slur his words during a panel discussion, Barrett gracefully stood and bowed them out.

Members of the Classic Cast



Conventioner William Campbell as Captain Koloth in "The Trouble With Tribbles," the old look in Klingons.

were tight-lipped about word on the progress of STAR TREK VI, then in production, and left the boat in mid-voyage to resume filming. When James Doohan let slip, while introducing George Takei, that Sulu commands his own starship in the new film, representatives from Paramount, policing the affair, almost jumped out of their shoes!

Nevertheless, a lot of interesting lore about STAR TREK was passed on to the ship's rapt audience. What follows is an edited transcript of the panel highlights. So pull up a deck chair, have a tall, cool one and harken to the words of Roddenberry, TREK's creator; Barrett, whose roles have included Number One and Nurse Chapel on the Classic show and Lwaxana Troi on THE NEXT GENERATION; Sirtis, who plays Counselor Troi; Robert Justman, Roddenberry's coproducer on both shows; Wil Wheaton, the departed Ensign Crusher and John DeLancie, the irrepressible Q.

Wheelchair-bound TREK creator Gene Roddenberry and wife Majel Barrett field questions last May on Sea Trek, cruising the Caribbean with a ship full of fans.



Among the cast reassembled for the first movie, Majel Barrett (l) as Nurse Chapel and Grace Lee Whitney as Janice Rand. Inset: Whitney, sixty, signs autographs.



Are you happy about not having to include the violence from the previous STAR TREK series in THE NEXT GENERATION?

Gene Roddenberry: If you mean slices of real life by the term "violence," I feel that it belongs on television shows. It is gratuitous violence that I objected to or "violence for the sake of violence." I had the same objections to gratuitous sex, which I very seldom have any objection to at all! At the beginning of STAR TREK we were in search of ourselves, and something worth writing about.

Robert Justman: That's right. Violent sex is what we wanted to do!

Majel Barrett: That's why we had Shatner!

How do you explain the use of the Borg if you are really trying to get away from violence in the new series?

Gene Roddenberry: The Borg were not the tools of violence. The Borg were violent because that was their nature. The violence we object to is that which does not necessarily have a place in the show. Violence and death are a part of life. But, why should the show be about that? If the show is trying to make a statement, I have no objection to that.

William Campbell: The wonderful thing about STAR TREK—and I don't know if this still prevails—is that it is

OLD TREK VS. NEW TREK

“When the director yelled ‘Cut’ on the classic series we all went our separate ways,” said Majel Barrett. “On **THE NEXT GENERATION** people actually hang out together after work.”



Grace Lee Whitney as Yeoman Janice Rand with DeForest Kelley and William Shatner in “Miri.” Below: Whitney fends off Kirk’s advances in “The Naked Time.”



the only show in which I saw rehearsals were that extensive. We had table discussions where we used to discuss lines and scenes . . .

Majel Barrett: We don’t do that anymore.

William Campbell: When I did **STAR TREK**, we did take the time to do table rehearsals. I guess today they have so much to do in so short of a time . . .

Majel Barrett: And, it costs too much. We always shoot **THE NEXT GENERATION** with a time call at 7 a.m. and never leave before 8 or 9 p.m. My call sheet always says 4 a.m. I remember one day it was 4 a.m. until 9:15 p.m. It took seventeen hours to do this one show. It is a difficult show to do, but it is done so well and so perfect that right now, it is like a family.

We have editors who are directing, actors who are directing, including Brent Spiner, who will do one show next season. I remember Patrick Stewart telling me, “I wouldn’t have anything to do with directing.” He directed the series 100th episode [last sea-

son]. I think that we have been improving **THE NEXT GENERATION** each season. Each week, to me, is like a mini-movie in that it is able to stand on its own. I think the show is the best produced series on television today, without a doubt.

Mr. Campbell, what do you think of the improved Klingon image in **THE NEXT GENERATION** and the movie series?

William Campbell: I had a difficult time with that. When they did the first movie, it looked like the Klingon had gone through some metamorphic stage. In the Classic series, the Klingons looked like humans. I never understood the reasoning behind the extensive makeup change except for the reason that it is a new show.

Majel Barrett: The reason is to delineate different races throughout the Universe.

William Campbell: Well, the Klingon attitude has changed from the Classic series, too. They fight together now—they are compatriots.

Majel Barrett: They were meant to be. Gene [Roddenberry] never did like the Klingons because they were represented as being “all bad.” Gene said, “There is no such thing as a whole race that is all bad.” He really hated that. But, the fans insisted they be represented in that way.

William Campbell: I have a marvelous story on Bill Shatner which I can tell because he is able to laugh at it. Everyone knows that when Shatner

goes from one series to another, his hairdo changes dramatically. I remember one wig he had which made him look like Shirley Temple!

When we were doing “The Trouble With Tribbles,” Shatner called me and said, “I have a script that I own that I would like you to look at which could possibly be produced through your connections in Yugoslavia.” Shatner planned to come out to my place the next day with the script. My wife told the kids that Captain Kirk was coming to our house. The next day, there are thirty kids out in front, waiting for Captain Kirk to arrive.

I see a motorcycle pull up and this guy parks it. He was bald. I did not recognize him at first as Shatner! The kids see him but don’t recognize him either. Bill said that he did not wear his toupee whenever possible for comfort reasons. Shatner saw all of those kids but was smart enough not to tip off to them, so they never knew who they saw.

Grace Lee Whitney, do you have a part in **STAR TREK VI**?

Whitney: Yes, I do. A better part than in **STAR TREK IV**. To me, more than one line is a large part. I have an actual position, too. I had been hired for the part a few months before the movie had been shot. As it got closer to the filming date, I still had no script. I called casting and asked for a script, wondering if it was because I had no speaking part. Well, this went back and forth until the morning I went to work on **STAR TREK VI** and I still did not have a script.

They sent me a few pages of the scene they were doing on that day which I read. We then shot about half the day and [director] Nick Meyer said to me, “Can you cry real tears on

camera?” As I was talking to him, I was mentally recalling a recent event where my daughter-in-law was pregnant and got very sick and was in the hospital taking intravenous feedings in her arms because she could not retain food or fluids by mouth. I began to cry just looking at him.

Majel Barrett, why are you not in the **STAR TREK** movies?

Barrett: Unfortunately, the same thing holds true for the new movie that has held true for the rest of them. It might not be a good idea for Majel Barrett to go running around the set, not for Mrs. Gene Roddenberry. The movie series hasn’t gotten past the point where they can handle the fact that Gene Roddenberry is the creator. It’s just unfortunate.

What was it like to work with Marina Sirtis, Majel?

Barrett: (Jokingly) That was pure hell! She is hogging the camera at all times. And the nude scene we did in “Menage a Troi,” I at least had a bodysuit on. But, Marina is an animal! I thought she was going to sell tickets!

Majel, are you a Bohunk?

Majel Barrett: Yes. That is an American term for Bohemian. My grandmother used to make me pray in Bohemian but I have never been to the country. I am a Rumanian Gypsy of Bohemian origin and everyone

Majel Barrett as Lwaxana Troi with Marina Sirtis as her daughter, Deanna Troi, on **THE NEXT GENERATION**.



thinks that makes me a little wild.

That is why when Gene came home one day to notify me that he had the perfect part for me, of Lwaxana Troi, he said, "I have the greatest part set up for you in *THE NEXT GENERATION*—and you don't even have to act!"

What are you involved in, Grace Lee Whitney?

Whitney: I work at Recovery, helping recovering addicts. I am looking to get married again, and I am going to be a grandmother again in November, 1991. I interview for commercials, but, so far, haven't got one.

Majel, why did they get rid of your character, Number One, in "The Cage"?

Majel Barrett: Because NBC took one look at it and thought the show was too cerebral for the current television audience. They wanted some changes and felt that my position as Number One would have to be cut because no one would believe that a woman could hold the position of second in command. And, secondly, NBC wanted to get rid of the guy with the pointed ears because they felt he looked too diabolic and sexy. Gene handled this argument by deciding to keep Spock and marry the woman because he felt the public would not have it any other way.

The third thing they wanted was to change the 50/50, male/female crew ratio to 70/30, because they felt it looked like too much hanky-panky would be going on around that Starship. Gene acquiesced to that because he felt that 30 good women could handle a crew of 300 anyway.

Majel, whose idea was it to

On Sea Trek the actresses ribbed each other about doing their nude scene in third season's "Menage A Troi."



Majel Barrett as Chapel gets steamy with Leonard Nimoy in "The Naked Time." Above: Signing autographs on Sea Trek and selling her straw hats.

call Deanna Troi, "Little One"?

Majel Barrett: I would imagine since Gene re-wrote the first script, it would be Gene. I did not originate that. (Jokingly) There are names I would like to call her. We have a marvelous relationship, really. People on the *THE NEXT GENERATION* set actually hang out together after work. On the Classic series, when the director yelled "Cut," we all went our separate ways. The new show is truly a family-type situation.

Majel, are you the computer voice on THE NEXT GENERATION?

Majel Barrett: Yes. And the first time I ended up talking to myself was in "Menage a Troi." David Livingston, the producer at the time, felt that I could not pull off doing the voices for both parts. I simply changed the level of my voice pitch for Lwaxana to a higher level, whereas the computer voice remained the same. I got screen credit for doing the computer voice, starting with "Mind's Eye." After 26 years on *STAR TREK*, I finally got screen credit for my computer voice.

Why has THE NEXT GENERATION been passed over for Emmy nominations?

Majel Barrett: Patrick Stewart is working on that right now, and he should have it. I think this next time, we might be a little luckier. The prediction is that within the next five years, there will be two networks—one will have gone under. Cable and syndication will be taking over in a very



effective way.

Why don't you use more Native Americans in the cast?

Gene Roddenberry: I don't do the casting. We had an Indian in the old episode where Kirk marries an Indian, Mirimane. *THE NEXT GENERATION* is not out to represent one race or group. It is about people—all people.

Who does the casting of parts for STAR TREK?

Majel Barrett: Gene really doesn't have anything to do with the casting. Actors are seen directly in the casting department for their parts. Gene remains active in it, but at a much different level. There are no parts in *THE NEXT GENERATION* specifically written for anyone, anyway. The story comes first in the series. If the character happens to fit in the story, it is great. The writers do not take a particular character and say they are going to write a story for that character. The first consideration with *THE NEXT GENERATION* is the script and the story. That is why you are getting quality television.

Where is the relationship going between Troi and Riker on THE NEXT GENERATION?

Marina Sirtis: Forget about it! It's not going to happen! Jonathan and I play a lot of stuff that ends up on the cutting room floor. We would like to see the characters have a relationship, but the producers want him to be the "Stud of the Galaxy" to boff the "Bimbo of the Week."

How tall are you, Marina?

Sirtis: I am 5'3½". It looks like I am taller because I am always standing on little boxes on *THE NEXT GENERATION*. Otherwise, a two-shot with me and Jonathan would be impossible.

Has THE NEXT GENERATION cast signed an option to do the next STAR TREK movie and will the cast be rotated on television every six years?

Marina Sirtis: No. There will not be a *STAR TREK VII*. There will be a *STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION—THE MOVIE*. If *STAR TREK VI* makes money, then there will be another *STAR TREK* movie with us in it. They might even bring Wesley back. We have only signed to do the television series. The movies are totally different. They would have to re-negotiate with us for the movies.

John DeLancie, what char-

James Doohan introduces George Takei and lets slip Sulu gets his own starship command in STAR TREK VI.



acter development would you like to see for Q? He seems to be maturing a little.

DeLancie: That's very generous of you to say so. I don't know. I always like to be scared in movies. For me, science fiction and humor have never been my cup of tea, although I do seem to be associated with that. I would like to see some really scary stuff and Q be a part of it.

What did you think of Jonathan Frakes' comment regarding TREK fans on the Arsenio Hall show?

Wil Wheaton: I think the only people who were offended by Frakes' comment take themselves a tad bit too seriously.

Frakes' comment, for those of you who did not see that show, was that some people are a little weird, and I think I agree with that. There are maybe 25% of STAR TREK fans who are left of center and everyone else is fine. It is that 25% who come out and sit in front of your home. It happened to me. A guy camped out on my front lawn for four days and had 600,000 photos in his car for me to sign. I had to call the police to make him leave. I think that is weird. And it is that 25% of the people that unfortunately stick with you in memory.

John DeLancie: I was walking down the street in New York: you have to kind of have your antennae out a little bit when you walk the streets there—and I saw a guy coming toward me—I already picked him up on radar as being a "little strange." I saw him beam in on me and I tried to avoid him. Finally, he was

Wil Wheaton, wary of the fans.



STARSHIP HEARTBREAKER

“Jonathan [Frakes] and I play a lot of stuff that ends up on the cutting room floor,” said Marina Sirtis. “The producers want him to be ‘Stud of the Galaxy,’ to boff the ‘Bimbo of the Week.’”



Majel Barrett with William Shatner on the original show. Barrett said she's not in STAR TREK VI because the filmmakers didn't want Roddenberry's wife on the set.

right up to me and I thought he was going to pull a gun. Instead he said, “You're Q.” Actually, at that point, I wasn't sure whether or not I preferred that he'd pulled a gun. I said, “Yes, I am.” He said, “Can you bring people back from the dead?” I thought quickly and said, “Only those that I like.” He went, “Yeah,” and continued on. I'd been spared!

Why doesn't Brent Spiner do more convention appearances?

Marina Sirtis: Brent Spiner did one convention in New York and all he got was a lot of grief from the fans. He was even given nasty nicknames. Brent is quiet and shy. He did the New York convention to test the waters and he got a lot of bad feedback. You guys scared him off.

Does Patrick Stewart like to do conventions?

Marina Sirtis: Patrick Stewart enjoys and does conventions, does not have a problem with them, and handles them well. In England, Patrick was an aging character actor. In America, he is a sex symbol! Hey, he's happy!

Wil Wheaton, will you be

back on THE NEXT GENERATION?

Wheaton: If a script comes up and I am available and it is mutually acceptable, I may do it. They say they have a number of ideas but I don't know what will come of it. The producers said they had a script, but, whether it will be produced is pretty much up to them.

Has Whoopi Goldberg been to the set since she won her Oscar?

Marina Sirtis: No, she didn't bring it in.

Of THE NEXT GENERATION cast, who holds the record for putting clothespins on people?

Wil Wheaton: I think I was the only member of the cast who was immature enough to do that. I think everyone else strayed away from it.

Any funny stories from the set of THE NEXT GENERATION?

John DeLancie: It is one of the more fun sets to work on. I just come in once in a while where the “regulars” are there all the time . . .

Marina Sirtis: And he gets more to say in one episode than I do in a whole season!

John DeLancie: Yes, well,

all that aside, there is a lot of work to do. My experience on THE NEXT GENERATION is that I have a lot of work to do in a very short time—at least half the time I would like to do it in. If it doesn't work, we just shoot it again and again. When you are working 12-14 hours per day, it isn't like a hilarious atmosphere on the set.

Marina Sirtis: Sometimes it is.

Wil Wheaton: Especially when you are not around.

What are your favorite THE NEXT GENERATION episodes?

Wil Wheaton: “Final Mission” was my favorite because it was the first time in my commitment to the series I was given something challenging to do which was a stretch for me as an actor. Getting into the third season, I was a little frustrated because I wasn't being given a thing to do. Which, according to information I got from Paramount higher-ups, is because a lot of people after the first season said, “We hate Wesley! And we want him to die!” Which for me, at age fourteen, was a swell thing to hear. They scared the writers so much that they never wrote for me again.

John DeLancie: It seemed to me that the writers were using Wesley to get themselves out of trouble. And because of that, they made the classic mistake of wearing out the character, which did you a great disservice.

Wil Wheaton: They never wrote for me again until the end. Midway through the third season, I was beginning to feel like a “day player” who was just doing a lot of consecutive days. Around the time I turned eighteen, I really felt I was stagnating until I said that I wanted to leave and do films.

Then they started writing great stuff for me. If they had given me great stuff like in “Final Mission” and in the two or three shows that led up to that episode, I would never have left. I got TOY SOLDIERS around that time and felt it was a good character with great depth and possibilities. I could, at that point, go around and say, “Aye, aye, Captain,” for another year or do the movie. I asked to be let go. □

STAR TREK

THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY

STAR TREK VI: THE LAST HURRAH?

The Classic Cast may not be ready to pass the baton to The Next Generation.

By Sheldon Teitelbaum

Though STAR TREK VI is widely perceived as the swan song for its Classic Cast of characters—and was so conceived by Paramount Pictures—a source close to the production indicates that the studio may have had a change of heart. Paramount is said to be so high on the film that they have removed Kirk's voice-over log that was to end the picture and pass the baton to "a new generation." Big box-office December 13 will make VII a surety.

Last January, Nicholas Meyer described his forthcoming film, STAR TREK VI: THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY as "a small story about Spock in love." It would not, he declared from his office at Paramount, function as a noisy curtain call for the feature franchise. "I would not like to create a movie that ends with a bang or pulls too much on the heartstrings," he said. "I just want to tell a good story that seems to relate to today."

But by mid-April, when the film moved into production, the film's romantic theme—if it ever had one—had been deleted. Perhaps Paramount differed with Meyer over his minimalist thematic intentions. Certainly the budget was minimized—the film is being made for a paltry \$26 million—with a goodly portion of that doled out to the principals—and was shot on redressed sets of STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION (except for the bridge) to save money.

Maybe someone more familiar with the original series realized that unlikely romantic interludes between Spock and women, variously human, Vulcan and



An Efrosian from STAR TREK VI, an alien race first introduced to the series in scenes in STAR TREK IV.

Klingon, had been done to death on TV, and would hardly sustain what should amount to a fond and respectful adieu to the vintage cast. Or maybe Meyer was making up the entire business to keep the hounds off the scent.

Whatever transpired, the film now works as a fairly obvious parable of *perestroika*, heralding the impending breakup of the Klingon empire after one of its key energy resources goes *kerblooey* in a far-future version of the disaster at Chernobyl.

Starfleet is informed that the Klingon Empire will not last the century, and that its breakup will prove detrimental to the Federation, not to mention Starfleet, which faces imminent mothballing.

Fortunately, a Klingon Gorbachev called Gorkon emerges, and he appears to favor forging a loose alliance with the Federation. But Gorkon is assassinated before the alliance can be locked in place, and blame for his murder falls upon Captain Kirk who, still grieving for his son (killed by Klingons in STAR TREK III), finds himself hard-put to support the coming rapprochement. Indeed, with only three months before standing down for retirement, the Enterprise crew as a whole finds itself in a snit over this last mission. Whether anyone is sufficiently peeved to kill becomes the movie's central mystery.

STAR TREK VI began shooting on location in Los Angeles' Griffith Park during the first week of April. Principal photography ended nearly three months later. Apart from the series regulars, the film guest stars actor David Warner, wasted as an outpost governor in STAR TREK V, now back as Gorkon. John Schuck also



Leonard Nimoy as Mr. Spock with Kim Cattrall as Valera, the Vulcan officer aboard the Enterprise who plots to prevent Klingon from joining the Federation.

reprises his Klingon persona from STAR TREK IV. Kim (MANNEQUIN) Cattrall plays Valera, a Vulcan officer aboard the Enterprise initially written in as Saavik (and written out when Meyer was unable to secure Kirstie Alley for the part). Christopher Plummer stars as the Klingon leader Chang. Gorkon's daughter is played by Rosanna DeSoto. A shape-shifting alien is played by black model Iman (NO WAY OUT). Kirtwood (ROBOCOP) Smith appears as the Federation's commander-in-chief. Morgan Shepherd plays a Klingon prison commandant.

ILM was commissioned to perform the film's optical effects.

As is evident from the final log of the Enterprise, which may well have been rewritten at this juncture, STAR TREK VI: THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY is intended to function as a linking vehicle to a spate of new feature movies using the cast and setting of THE NEXT GENERATION. Indeed, one of its minor Klingon characters is a Colonel Worf—Kirk and Bones' defense attorney—ostensibly Lt. Worf's great-grandfather, and played by Michael Dorn, shorn of his goatee and nose appliance.

STAR TREK VI is appropriately reverential, both to the times and the competition. In one scene, Leonard Nimoy, as Spock, attempts to allay Kirk's initial rage at being finagled into paving the way for Camp David-like peace talks with an old Vulcan proverb: "Only Nixon could go to China." In another, Kirk is observed necking with an apparently comely female on a Klingon prison planet. McCoy, weary of

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STAR TREK

THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY

NICHOLAS MEYER FRANCHISE MR. FIX-IT

The director of STAR TREK VI on his reputation for doing quick repairs on Paramount's faltering final frontier.

By Sheldon Teitelbaum

Back in the saddle, as it were, directing STAR TREK VI, it may indeed seem to Nicholas Meyer that he has been toiling in Gene Roddenberry's vineyard forever. It's been over ten years since Harve Bennett enlisted him to help recapture the essence of the original series that had eluded director Robert Wise when he made STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE.

"The first film made \$150 million—an enormous amount of money," acknowledged Meyer. "There wasn't ever any question that they were going to do a second one. The theory here, though, was that a lot of people went to see it—especially overseas—under the impression that it was STAR WARS.

"I hadn't seen the movie, and I am not going to criticize Robert Wise. I can only say you learned a lot from watching it about the things that didn't work. But if somebody hadn't gone and done that first... let's just say it would be a cheap shot to say how omniscient his successors were.

"I just looked at the movie and asked if it was as entertaining as it should have been. I hadn't seen much of the TV series. They showed me the 'Space Seed' episode from the original series, the first movie and four drafts of story ideas, none of which seemed to satisfy. I was then told they had a draft coming in for STAR TREK II,



Director Nicholas Meyer with Iman as the shapeshifting alien Kirk has a dalliance with on a prison planet in STAR TREK VI, only to find out his liaison was a male.

and that it was unbelievable. Would I be interested?

"I asked to read the draft, and then I didn't hear from Bennett. I called and asked what had happened, and he said, 'We're not happy with the draft.' I said, 'Let me read it,' and Harve said, 'There's no point—it's 150 pages of you-won't-like-it.' By this time, I was sort of intrigued about doing a space opera. I said, 'No, really, send it,' and 'Yes, it wasn't right,' and I said, 'What about the previous draft,' and he said, 'No, you don't understand, it's another story entirely—they are really different.'"

Meyer asked for them all, and after reading them, suggested they compile a laundry list of elements that they liked in all five scripts. It could be a line of dialogue, it could be a

scene, a plot. Meyer suggested a screenplay cobbling them together into a single story. One story was about terraforming—the Genesis project, one was about Kirk's son, and one was about Spock's death.

Meyer said that his lack of familiarity with the original series forced him, in a sense, to re-invent Roddenberry's format. By doing so, understandably, he and Roddenberry parted company. Despite the original series' obvious imperialism, Roddenberry envisioned the Enterprise as an exploratory vessel engaged in a scientific mission. For Meyer, however, the alleged civilian character of the show was never clear, and always overshadowed by its intrinsic militarism.

"If I had seen more, I might not have been so free and easy

with what I decided it was. And what I decided it was, was, as Roddenberry had initially declared, the adventures of Captain Horatio Hornblower in outer space. Therefore, I wanted to stress the nautical elements of this tale.

"I'm not terribly interested in space. But I was interested in real ships—RUN SILENT, RUN DEEP, frigates blasting each other. I wanted the characters to look like sailors, not like they were wearing pajamas. I wanted the Enterprise to be reminiscent of a "tin can" [Navy slang for destroyers]. 'These are not comfortable places,' I said, 'so let's rip up the carpets, put in more instrumentation, electronic bosun's whistles and ship's bells.' I did what I could to echo a nautical frame of reference."

Pound for pound, said Meyer, STAR TREK II was the most successful of the film features because it was the cheapest to produce. "It was successful in two ways: in and of itself as a commercial venture and, two, because it rescued the franchise. If STAR TREK II and the milieu in which the rest of this stuff could exist hadn't been created, there would have been no subsequent film and, arguably, no NEXT GENERATION either."

Meyer chose not to work on STAR TREK III because he believed that reincarnating Spock was a cheat, undermining the integrity of the preceding film. "When we talked



The crew of the Enterprise, celebrating 25 years in space in STAR TREK VI.

about killing Spock," he recalled, "there was a great outcry. I got letters saying, 'If Spock dies you die.' People said, 'You can't kill Spock.' I said, 'Of course you can, but you have to kill him well.' If his death appears to be the result of a paragraph in Nimoy's contract that says he gets to end it all, then it will be perceived as a nonorganic event resented as cynical manipulation. So it has to grow out of the whole story. But once you've killed him, I said, don't bring him back, don't wrench people around like that.

"I fought very hard to make him dead, and the shots that imply a resurrection—the vision of the casket on the Genesis planet—were done over my dead body, with my strenuous objection. I objected so strenuously, and went to such lengths, that a producer on the film referred to me as morally bankrupt. He said, 'You'd walk over your mother to get this the way you wanted,' and I said, 'You know I think

you're right.'"

Meyer did not, however, permit his vehement objections to jeopardize his relationship with Bennett, Shatner, or Nimoy. "Sure I was a stick-in-the-mud," he said. "But it was only a movie. It's not worth my friendship. STAR TREK has never been just a business for me. It's something for which I have great love, and it introduced me to a whole world of people who have become my friends, and I hope will always stay my friends. And because they are my friends, I sure as hell am not going to break up with them over a movie I'm not involved in.

"I wasn't considering what they were doing as immoral, just aesthetically misled. I don't believe you can bring a dead person back to life. Having seen it in STAR TREK III, I still don't believe it. But okay, he's back, Leonard is back, and since it's Leonard, I'm happy."

No bridges burned, Meyer was called upon to contribute to STAR TREK IV: THE

STEPFATHER OF SUCCESS

"STAR TREK II rescued the franchise. If that milieu hadn't been created in which this stuff could exist, there would have been no subsequent film and, arguably, no Next Generation."

VOYAGE HOME. Bennett and Nimoy had written a story, two writers had been hired to flesh it out, but the studio didn't like the product. Dawn Steele called in Meyer and asked him to meet with Bennett and Nimoy. Nimoy told him about their story, indicating that they would have to chuck their efforts and start a new script from scratch. Once again, Meyer's genius for cobbling together unlikely elements from disparate sources came to the fore. This time, he lifted plot elements from a movie he had hitherto directed—TIME AFTER TIME.

Bennett and Meyer divided the movie up, with Bennett writing the space scenes, or "bookends," and Meyer taking on the earthbound segment. His segment began with the Enterprise pulling into Earth orbit and Spock saying he can identify the time period by the pollution content of the atmosphere.

There had been a scene in TIME AFTER TIME which had been left on the cutting room floor of a kid with a ghetto blaster playing loud rock. "I screwed it up when I filmed it. In STAR TREK IV, I got to put in everything I missed then."

Meyer believes the movie did its bang-up business precisely because of its contemporary setting. "I think it had a really appealing theme. It wasn't an outer space movie. It was an on-earth movie. For a lot of people who don't go to STAR TREK movies, the format is about spaceships. This was about whales and ecology and the environment. It was also very entertaining. Ned Tanen, then the head of Paramount, read the screenplay and said, 'I'd make this movie even if it was not a STAR TREK film.'"

Not being a Treknik, Meyer

sympathizes with those who never catch on to the series' appeal. "When I started seeing the old TREK episodes, I could easily see why a certain kind of person wouldn't watch them. You get impatient with their pedestrian nature. They were trying to do a science fiction show every week with primitive effects. And some of the imaginative leaps, like a guy with pointy ears, may have simply appeared ridiculous unless you were the kind of person who could get past that kind of stuff and into the meat of what it was about, which is people and relationships and moral questions. There is always a group of people left out by this because they can't get past the scenery.

"The other problem with the features, of course, is that they are not all great pictures. Some are better than others, and the one that comes after one that isn't always has a problem bringing people in.

"STAR TREK at its best

John Schuck returns as the revenge-crazed Klingon ambassador of STAR TREK IV who accuses Kirk of murder.



“I used to look down my nose at modern myths because they are not old myths. But if someone dreams them up in plastic, with merchandising, does that make them any less potent?”



Klingon President Gorkon (David Warner), daughter Rosanna DeSoto (l) and General Chang (Christopher Plummer), greeted by Kirk in STAR TREK VI.

seems to be pop allegory,” continued Meyer. “You take things that are happening on Earth that are a little too close to think about objectively and you put them into a science fiction context, and everyone gets to contemplate these questions. Now I don’t read a lot of science fiction—I used to read Jules Verne and H.G. Wells—so I’m not sure I have insight into the power of this thing. But I identify very strongly with Arthur Conan Doyle, who was very good at Sherlock Holmes, but didn’t quite get it either. I understand that it does work and it does have some value, but I just do it.

“You don’t need to be a TREK person to do this stuff well. The Catholic Mass has a given text. Everybody knows the text of the Catholic Mass,

but it’s been set to music by a lot of different composers. There is the Verdi *Requiem*, the Mozart *Coronation Mass*, and the Hayden *Mass in Time of War*. Each film has a different director, and each has a vision of how they want it to play.”

Meyer recognizes the mythic resonances of the TREK format, and admires its staying power. “I think it can last as long as Mickey Mouse. I used to look down my nose at modern myths because they are not old myths. Then I thought, where do myths come from? Someone must dream them up. And if they are dreamed up in plastic, and with merchandising, does that make them any less potent or textured as so called ‘older myths?’

“I am inclined to turn up my nose less at Mickey Mouse and

STAR TREK these days. Somehow you tap into an unexplored or unexpressed piece of mass consciousness, and suddenly everything comes together in psychological terms. I don’t presume to be able to say why it is that STAR TREK seems to be capable of assuming mythological dimensions. I just have an instinct as I watch it and watch people interact with it that it must be true.”

Which is not to say that Meyer is big on fandom. He is a Sherlock Holmes fan himself. But like most of the people involved in making TREK, Meyer prefers to maintain a healthy distance from the Treknicks. “I have always been very uninvolved with fandom. When the studio says the fans will or won’t like something, I don’t want to hear it. Art is not created by a committee, and this may not be art with a capital A, but as far as I am concerned it is—and I would never tell you a joke that I didn’t think was funny. I don’t think the fans know what they like until they’ve been exposed to it. Ask

them how they’d like to see Spock die, they’ll say, ‘No.’ I say, ‘Are you sure? Suppose I show it to you like this,’ and they say, ‘Oh, I didn’t know it would be like this.’

“I don’t really understand fandom. I tend to think it’s people who have too much time on their hands. But I would not presume to criticize people for being fans. It’s a minor point, but without those fans, they never would have made the first movie. Without their zeal and persistence, you wouldn’t get a TV series which by most standards was a flop, and invest millions in a feature. I just don’t believe they have any business in the creation of a film.”

Meyer has few fears that the feature franchise will survive the passing of the old cast and the success of the TV series. Indeed, he has the peculiar opinion that when it comes to STAR TREK, Paramount isn’t necessarily in it only for the money. Not that it would continue to make TREK pictures if they had become unprofitable. And not that they’d use the TV show if it couldn’t sustain a new line of features. But there is something more than rank greed, he said, in the studio’s regard for the product.

“I haven’t heard about moving the TV cast into feature films,” Meyer noted diplomatically, “but it sounds eminently logical. They had to make six features for that to happen. To leave a good taste and to pave the way, if they really view the TV show as part of an ongoing franchise, which I think it’s become, they have to care for it. They have enormous respect here for the franchise, and I think they honestly share the public’s affection for it. I don’t think it’s because it makes money that is exclusively the source of their affection.” □

SAAVIK: ENTERPRISE EXILE

Though STAR TREK VI wraps up the series for the Classic cast, the fate of Lt. Saavik, a character introduced by Kirstie Alley in STAR TREK II and played by Robin Curtis in STAR TREK III and IV, is left dangling on Vulcan, where she was left behind without explanation at the beginning of STAR TREK IV. Early scripts of the new sequel had designated Saavik as the Vulcan plotter out to disrupt the rapprochement between the Federation and the Klingon Empire. And at one point the character was reported to

have been the offspring of Spock and Saavik, a reference to a subplot cut out of the script for STAR TREK IV (17:1:4), that explained why Saavik was left behind.

“Paramount led me to believe that Saavik was being

groomed for more participation,” said Curtis, “that they were finally trying to include some younger regular characters in the movies. Many fans were excited about the prospects of a romantic pregnancy storyline.”

Curtis said she was never contacted by Paramount about continuing her role in STAR TREK VI. “That hurt a little bit,” she said. “It was a far too emotional situation for me to pursue it, to be aggressive enough to call and question why I wasn’t considered for the part.”

Sue Uram

Robin Curtis as Lt. Saavik.



STAR TREK

THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY

By Thomas Doherty

Convention-attending, Vulcan-ear-wearing Trekkers can reel off episode names and prime-time broadcast dates, with airy nonchalance. For less compulsive terrans, however, the precise details of all those log entries tend to blur into one big STAR TREK matrix. Not only is distilling a Top Ten List from a quarter century of five year missions like singling out stray molecules in hyperspace, but rerun memories obscured by prejudice (or once enhanced by recreational drug use) cloud discerning critical evaluation. Rather than an invidious hierarchy, then, bring up "on visual" this baker's dozen of STAR TREK Moments, scattered images space seeded by the most famous and beloved SF series ever.



Mariette Hartley as Zarabeth, Spock's ill-fated love in "All Our Yesterdays."

1. "All Our Yesterdays" (3/14/69): Regressing to pre-rational species primitivism in an antediluvian glacial wasteland, the unflappable Vulcan gets in touch with his animal self and fetching Mariette Hartley. How Neanderthal is the first officer? McCoy is the voice of reason. The climactic kiss-off, where Hartley is abandoned to a life alone, is an emotional killer.

2. "Let That Be Your Last Battlefield" (1/10/69): One of the best examples of Roddenberrian social consciousness, this checkerboard civil rights allegory puts racism right in the eye of the beholder. Half-black/half-white Lou Antonio

TEN BEST LIST

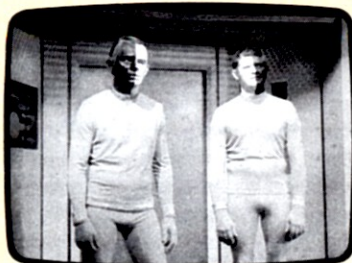
Our critic logs a baker's dozen of the series' finest moments.

fights half-white/half-black Frank Gorshin in a maniacal intra-species grudge match. The terrible absurdity of pigmentation prejudice is brought home unforgettably when an exasperated Antonio explains to a bewildered Kirk that his enemy is black and white on the opposite side of the face. Oh.

3. "The Menagerie" (11/17/66 and 11/24/66): In the original show's only two-parter, jerrybuilt from portions of the pilot episode, Jeffrey Hunter plays the horribly scarred and crippled Commander Pike. Spock risks court martial to spirit his former captain to the mental wonderland of Talos IV. The final farewell is a joyful metaphor for the liberating escapism of science fiction fantasy. Like the viewer, locked in a chair, Pike is free to roam the galaxy in his mind.

4. "Arena" (1/19/67): In a forced *mano a reptile*, Captain Kirk beats up Lizardman but refuses to turn him into a wallet. Classic Trek in its pure form: a guy in a ludicrous monster outfit, know-it-all aliens, technological man thrust back on his animal cunning, and an unmistakably Californian backdrop. The iconographic status

Frank Gorshin (l) as Bele and Lou Antonio as Lokai in third season's "Let That Be Your Last Battlefield."



nerving—though George Takei and Nichelle Nichols have a of this episode was recently confirmed in a respectful homage in BILL AND TED'S BOGUS JOURNEY.

5. "Space Seed" (2/16/67): Later the basis for the second feature length movie, this well-remembered episode features Ricardo Montalban, baring his chest and hissing energy, as the genetically engineered sexually magnetic *ubermensch* Khan. Naturally, the Enterprise's female historian is putty in his *muy macho* hands.

6. "The City on the Edge of Forever" (4/6/67): Science fiction writer Harlan Ellison takes on his perennial theme, the alternate currents of time. Joan Collins plays a soup kitchen pacifist whose survival will ensure Nazi victory in World War II. McCoy falls for her, Spock hides his ears, and Kirk permits the woman to die for all mankind.

7. "Amok Time" (9/15/67): They don't call it Vulcan for nothing: a travelogue view of Spock's sulfuric, desolate home planet and an introduction to local marriage rituals. Indelible because of the spontaneous emotional outburst and 10,000-watt smile from the heretofore straight-faced Leonard Nimoy ("Jim!"). McCoy gloats.

8. "Mirror, Mirror" (10/6/67): A nice take-off on a familiar science fiction trope, the old "parallel universe" scenario. When transporter beams get crossed, Kirk, Sulu, and Uhura find themselves in a total barbarian world and their parallel counterparts are vice versa. The cruel universe is surprisingly disorienting and un-

blast as their evil twins bedeviling the good ship Enterprise.

9. STAR TREK IV: THE VOYAGE HOME (1986): Save the whales and hold the anchovies in this fish-out-of-water time warp adventure, the only feature release to surface above dead weight effects and big-budget pressure. Among the many rib ticklers—Kirk holding pizza cartons in Golden



Encountering Harlan Ellison's time portal in first season's tragic love story "City on the Edge of Forever."

Gate Park, Scotty blowing minds at a glassworks, McCoy sputtering about emergency room surgeon/butchers, and Spock's use of the Vulcan Pinch to silence a bus commuter with an annoying ghetto blaster.

10. "The Best of Both Worlds" (3/18/89, 9/24/90): It's a little early for THE NEXT GENERATION to set up permanent residence in the televisual brain stem, but its constellation of characters are adamantly nudging in alongside the originals. The obvious candidate for stellar status is the extended-narrative Borg episodes, where Picard is hijacked and cyborged into an unwitting turncoat, imaginative, tense, and authentically bizarre, the cross-season cliff-hanger was the who-shot-J.R. of the 24th century.

Funniest STAR TREK Moments: No, not "The Trouble with Tribbles," but the SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE parodies. Michael O'Donoghue scripted what Lorne Michaels' classic SNL cast always con-

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Steven Spielberg's HOOK

Expensive live-action Never, Never Land boasts stellar cast.

By Lawrence Brooks

In an odd turn at exploiting a well-known tale, look for Steven Spielberg's sequel—of sorts—to PETER PAN, entitled HOOK, which Tri-Star Pictures opens December 13. The live-action adventure, based on the books of James M. Barrie, depicts Pan as a middle-aged businessman, facing off against a vengeful, middle-aged Captain Hook in a continuation of their legendary feud. Hook kidnaps Pan's children and disappears into Never Never Land. The cast is the most prestigious Spielberg has ever assembled: Dustin Hoffman as Captain Hook, Robin Williams as Peter Pan, Julia Roberts as Tinkerbell, Bob Hoskins as Hook's sidekick, Smee, and Maggie Smith as Wendy. Smith will wear makeup to appear to be 92 years old, and Roberts, playing a character only nine inches tall, filmed most of her scenes isolated on a blue-screen effects stage.

According to the *Los Angeles Times*, the stars and director are deferring their salaries for a percentage of the film's gross profits. Hoffman, Williams and Spielberg alone are said to be taking in a whopping 30% to 40% of the box office, one of the most lucrative "first dollar"



Maggie Smith

Walt Disney's Wendy. Smith plays the role as a 92-year-old lady.

deals ever made for a movie (credit the powerful Creative Artists Agency for the packaging). The huge deferred salaries are not reflected in the film's reported \$50 million budget which is rumored to have grown to \$65 million as filming dragged on longer than expected. Shooting began last February and was not expected to wrap until September. According to one on-set observer, Spielberg is taking a lot of time to shoot the film because he and the cast are improvising, shooting each scene as written, then experimenting with other

ideas.

Before Spielberg's involvement, the project originated with director Nick Castle, who came up with the story concept for Tri-Star, along with screenwriter Jim Hart. Castle, a childhood friend of director John Carpenter, who donned the mask of "The Shape" in HALLOWEEN, went on to direct THE LAST STARFIGHTER (1984), THE BOY WHO COULD FLY (1986) and TAP (1989). Spielberg, who had long wanted to film PETER PAN, reportedly read Castle and Hart's script and fell in love with it. According to a story in *Premiere*, the deal to do the film fell into place quickly once Spielberg called CAA chief Michael Ovitz to express his interest—Hoffman, Williams, Castle, and now Spielberg, are all CAA clients. Castle was offered—and reportedly took—a sweet deal to back out of the project gracefully, but was said to be disappointed at losing the opportunity to direct it.

The shooting of HOOK occupied nine soundstages at Columbia Pictures (formerly MGM studios) in Culver City, California. The planned flooding of two stages involved water tanks once used to film the amusement park miniature of Spielberg's disastrous 1941. HOOK'S climax takes place



Robin Williams

on one of the flooded stages, as Captain Hook's pirate ship comes under attack by a boatload of Indians and several of the Never Never Land Lost Boys' rafts in a large-scale water assault. Hook's plan is to turn Pan's son into a duplicate of himself, dressing the boy in a replica of his own costume, complete with wig.

Spielberg's new Never Never Land is designed by visual consultant John Napier, who did the magnificent sets for Andrew Lloyd Weber's *Cats*, working with production designer Norman Garwood, whose impressive credits include MISERY, THE PRINCESS BRIDE, and TIME BANDITS. The production's elaborate props range from an exquisite dollhouse for Tinkerbell to Never Never Land skateboards complete with their own sails. The skateboards figure in action filmed with four U.S. champion skateboarders.

An early production snafu was rumored to have involved problems with the project's titular prop. The production was said to have commissioned six ornate hooks for Hoffman, made from jewelry-grade silver at a cost of \$18,000 apiece. Sev-



Like the Disney cartoon, the film is based on the James M. Barrie fairy tale, a sequel of sorts with Williams as a grown-up Pan, and Hoffman as Hook.



Dustin Hoffman

eral others were constructed in steel and plastic, based on designs approved by Spielberg. But when the hooks were completed, they reportedly turned out to be hugely oversized on Hoffman's hand and were nixed by the actor. Smaller and lighter versions fashioned out of wood were also deemed unsatisfactory. Eventually, the original silver hooks were made to do, covered by lots of lace from Hook's shirt sleeve.

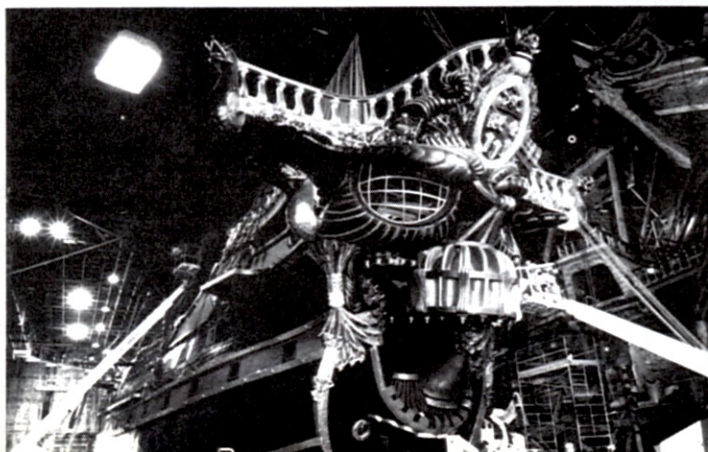
Word from the set is that Hoffman isn't doing his usual performance shtick—mumbling. As Hook, Hoffman is reportedly going over the top, aiming for a bravura performance. He'll have a long way to go to equal Hans Conreid's magnificent vocalization of the part in Disney's 1953 cartoon classic, or Cyril Ritchard's Broadway and TV performance opposite Mary Martin.

As an immense, stage-bound production, *HOOK* was responsible for a tremendous amount of construction. An elaborate pirate town was described by one crew member as "... colossal, it's 'Pirates of the Caribbean' on steroids." A giant tree-house set is so big it occupies two soundstages. One of the

most spectacular sets is a water tank lagoon with Hook's magnificent black and gold pirate ship, measuring 115-feet-long and well over 60-feet-high.

Spielberg reportedly imported expert British ship builders to construct a pirate ship that would actually be seaworthy. Unfortunately, the depth of water in the studio tank used for filming wasn't sufficient to float a boat, which required a displacement of 16 feet. When the tank was flooded, Hook's pirate ship reportedly fell over on its side. The solution was to saw-off the boat's hull, constructed at great expense by the shipbuilders, mounting it on a fiberglass barge to turn the sea-

The full-scale floating set of Hook's pirate galleon under construction at Columbia Pictures studios in Culver City. The big budget extravaganza opens December 13.



worthy vessel into a waterline model of the ship that could have been supplied more economically by any studio prop department.

Other problems during filming: the mast of Hook's ship proved so tall that the camera could not be moved far enough back to get the entire ship in frame, necessitating the use of post-production miniatures that hadn't been planned for. To shoot the back of the ship, designed to look like a pirate's face with glowing eyes formed by windows, the camera had to be moved out of the soundstage and into the street. A massive tent was erected to "extend the soundstage to the camera," according to a set source, to maintain the scene's lighting integrity.

Special effects and model work are being handled by Industrial Light and Magic, employing forced perspective techniques to miniaturize Tinker Bell, like those used to great effect in *DARBY O'GILL AND THE LITTLE PEOPLE*. In one scene, the camera was raised near the ceiling of the soundstage and aimed down on a real dollhouse (with missing sections) several feet away, while Roberts, far below on the stage floor, paced a set consisting of only "dollhouse floor." To the eye of the camera, Roberts will appear to be walking through a toy house. And, as in Disney's classic *PETER PAN* cartoon feature, *HOOK* features plenty of characters flying and gliding through the air, this time using blue-screen techniques and wire rigs.

The screenplay by Hart and Castle that hooked Spielberg to the project is extremely witty and very well written, with a



Julia Roberts as Tinker Bell, flying on wires, filming blue screen special effects action, work supervised by ILM.

fascinating central concept. Having lost to Peter Pan in their first encounter, Captain Hook has planned his revenge with great patience. As Hook tells Pan, the first time they fought, Pan's advantage was his youth, and Hook was no match for him. But, with Pan forsaking his youth and immortality to become human, he has begun to age. Pan is 35 when the film picks up, the same as Hook (who never grows old in Never Land). Now Hook can fight as Pan's *equal*. On Pan's 35th birthday, Hook lures him to Never Land to at last mete out his brand of justice, unaware Pan has become an anxiety-ridden yuppie lawyer in the interim.

HOOK is the ultimate Spielberg vehicle, reading like a compendium of the director's oft-repeated themes of childhood vs. adulthood that run as a thread through his *oeuvre*. Like most of Spielberg's work, the message is, "life is better if you are a child, growing up is a disaster." More food for thought for the armchair psychologists who wonder if Spielberg will ever stop worrying about his lost childhood and go on to more serious themes. For the moment, however, fantasy fans are glad to have him back, preoccupied as ever. His film faces stiff competition. Opening the same day: *STAR TREK VI* and Chevy Chase's *MEMOIRS OF AN INVISIBLE MAN*. □

THE PEOPLE UNDER THE STAIRS

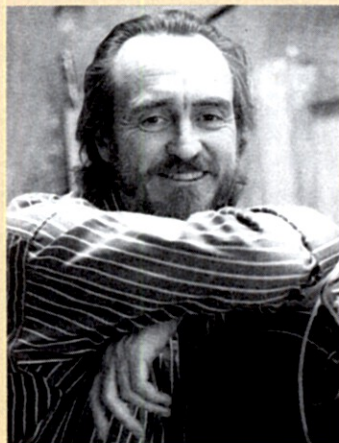
Wes Craven abandons Freddy Krueger's dreamscape for horror from the headlines.

By *Steve Biodrowski*

Wes Craven is worried. The creator of Freddy Krueger has a new horror film opening for Halloween, *THE PEOPLE UNDER THE STAIRS*, from Universal, and it's the first film he's done since the institution of the NC-17 rating. Craven, always one to push the ratings envelope, expects to encounter major difficulties. "My contract with the studio calls for an R," said Craven. "The net result of the new rating could be even more restrictions."

Increasing the chance of ratings trouble is the fact that the horror in Craven's new film is of a more realistic variety, devoid of the fantasy element prevalent in the director's work since *DEADLY BLESSING* (1981). *THE PEOPLE UN-*

Writer/director Wes Craven, the auteur behind *Elm Street*, plumbing urban terrors based on a true story.



Everett McGill keeps on coming, the psycho behind a residential house of horrors, proves hard to kill off in Wes Craven's latest shocker, scheduled for Halloween.

DER THE STAIRS features special effects by Peter Chesney (*SERPENT AND THE RAINBOW*) and prosthetic makeup for the title characters by Greg Nicotero, of KNB Efx. The unusual premise came from an article Craven read in a local Santa Monica newspaper twelve years ago. Neighbors reported seeing someone break into a house while the owners, a respectable couple, were away. Police investigated, heard noises from behind a locked door, and broke in, expecting to confront burglars who had barricaded themselves inside; instead, they found themselves face-to-face with the owners' children, who had been kept imprisoned all their lives.

"What appealed to me was the thought of a truth that was

radically different from the surface appearance and the fact that this was taking place in a neighborhood where people were supposedly enjoying the good, middle-class life," explained Craven, who was intrigued by "the idea that beneath the surface of apparent normalcy can be found strange aberrations of behavior: two people that appear to be well-behaved can still in secret perform atrocities on their own children."

In Craven's screenplay, a teenage boy from the ghetto, played by newcomer Brandon Adams, having reluctantly accompanied his friends on a burglary attempt, becomes isolated and trapped in a mansion, where he strikes up an alliance with an imprisoned girl. "I thought it was wonder-

fully ironic that people seeing the house burglarized were quite ready to say, 'This is what we would expect from the sort of people breaking in—they're coming to our decent world with all their depravity,' and then the police discovered what was going on in the house was actually more depraved. That sort of cross-meeting of two imprisoned cultures—one from the house, one from the ghetto—was stimulating to me."

The owners of the mansion are a childless couple who have been searching for a "perfect" child. Their attempts to find a perfect boy have been abandoned—the rejects are kept locked in a cellar beneath the stairs—and the girl has avoided a similar fate only by miming what her captors tell her are the actions of the perfect girl. The husband, played by *TWIN PEAKS'* Everett McGill, is a dangerous madman who has turned the house into an inescapable maze of booby traps and torture devices.

"I was really fascinated with the idea of using a house as a material symbol of the human mind," said Craven. "In the sense that madness could be depicted as the spaces of the house. The outside seems quite normal, and the first floor seems luxurious and appropriate, and yet the farther in you go, the more is unexplained or bizarre, so you have a feeling that any door could lead into



Yan Birch as the leader of the "people," kidnap victims locked away by a psychopath seeking to assemble the perfect nuclear family.

an almost infinite labyrinth of places and meaning. That sort of architectural representation of madness was very attractive to me. [The people under the stairs] are down there howling and trying to crawl up through any little crack in the foundation. In that sense, they're like the thoughts of people who are quite mad, who try to suppress the energies of life and youth and passion—those thoughts come out between the cracks, because they can never be fully contained."

Despite his enthusiasm for the material, Craven wrestled with the script for several years, always worrying that someone else would use the premise first, until a solution finally presented itself to him last year. "I always had a very long first act, and I never knew what to do with it," said Craven. "My basic rule of drama, which is no new rule, is that by the end of the first act you should have the protagonist and the antagonist introduced and you should have everything at stake clearly defined. I managed to get the young burglars' apprentice into the house and isolated by the end of the first act, but it was sixty pages, and he still hadn't met the girl, so I had to figure out a way for him to get there quicker. It sounded cliched, but I dreamt it while I was at the Brussels Film Festi-

"I was fascinated with the idea of a house as an architectural symbol of madness," said Craven. "The further in you go, the more there is that is unexplained or bizarre."

val. I had a lucid dream, in which I was aware of myself dreaming, and I went through the whole plot three times. Then I woke up and wrote it all down.

"I frankly didn't know whether Universal would go for it," said the writer/director. "It has a young, black kid as the male lead and some very strange characters. I thought they might think it was too off-the-wall. To their credit, [development executives] Jim Jacks and Tom Pollack are open to new ideas."

Though *THE PEOPLE UNDER THE STAIRS* is the second of Craven's two-picture deal with Alive Entertainment, his contract includes an option for two more horror films. There are several possibilities, but a sequel to *SHOCKER*, his first film for Alive, released by Universal in 1989, is not likely to be one of them. "I think Universal wanted another *NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET*, and it was not that," said Craven. "What Universal

is afraid of is that *SHOCKER* is inherently expensive, especially because [villain] Horace Pinker, in his final stage, is a living optical. They wanted to do it cheaply, under \$2 million. I didn't even want to attempt it for that. There's some talk about Shep [Gordon, Craven's partner at Alive] and I getting the rights back and having some other studio buy it—Universal sounded interested in doing that—because I think we could get it mounted somewhere with a decent budget."

Craven is also hoping to direct a big-budget, non-genre feature in the near future; originally, he intended to direct a non-genre project before his second horror film for Alive. "In a sense, I did," said Craven, pointing to *NIGHT VISION*, his two-hour TV pilot for NBC, which aired in November 1990, about a policewoman with multiple personalities.

Meanwhile, Craven has no regrets about working in horror. "A film like this I'm very

proud of and happy to do. This is very much a fable, and there's little in the way of modern fable and myths. Horror films do generate modern mythology. The boy and the girl escape from the house, but in a sense they also escape from the madness the house represents. The idea of children escaping the madness of parents, of the next generation liberating itself from the madness of a previous generation, is very old and powerful." □

McGill, ready for resistance, the mad hatter of a booby-trapped house with a pantry full of kidnap victims.



The Addams Family

The Charles Addams-inspired TV sitcom heads for the big screen.

By Sheldon Teitelbaum

Two sounds you will not hear in Paramount's \$35 million Christmas pick-up of ailing Orion's film of *New Yorker* cartoonist Charles Addams' "The Addams Family."

The first is of one hand clapping—one of the few visual puns *not* attempted while depicting the severed sentient human hand who, in the film, plays a highly mobile, Lassie-like character called "Thing." Shooting **THE ADDAMS FAMILY**, which took nearly 150 days to complete and involved sundry fits and false starts, was not a Zen-like experience for anyone; particularly not for first-time director and veteran cameraman Barry Sonnenfeld, for whom the film was an unusually ambitious and inordinately difficult directing debut.

The second sound is the resounding thud of Sonnenfeld's head on solid Burbank sod, when he passed out cold on the set during the second week of production.

Some of Sonnenfeld's associates appear to be asking whether art will imitate life when Paramount opens **THE ADDAMS FAMILY** November 22, with the film making as sickening a clunk as Sonnenfeld's head at the box-office. According to a former



Addams' family, drawn for *The New Yorker*, and collected in book form.

associate of producer Scott Rudin, some are saying that Rudin may, in fact, best be described as the film's uncredited director. "There isn't a shot in this movie that Scott didn't personally approve by looking through the camera," said the source.

Gale Tattersal, however, the second of the troubled film's two directors of photography, maintained that this was a malicious slur, or "Slag," directed at someone who should be commended for having taken on—and having seen to completion—so challeng-

ing a screen debut. "Barry did as well as you'd expect a DP to do on a picture like this," said Tattersal. "Sure it was running before you could walk, but remember that Scott [Rudin] *wanted* him in the picture. Sure they discussed a lot on the set, and Scott often disagreed with what was done, and so they did alternatives. But it was very much a collaboration rather than Barry being a tool of Scott's."

Having your director deep-six so early on in the game, acknowledged Rudin, is not the kind of thing—however quick his recovery—that inspires confidence in the suits and bean-counters in the front office. Especially when, as was the case with Orion, they're already hurting. "I was standing next to him when he

passed out," recalled the bearded Rudin from his office at Paramount. "I was a little bit panicked because he wasn't particularly having a rough day. We were just talking, looking at the monitor, and I heard a thud, and he was on the floor. I thought he was joking at first, and I bent down and he was out. I smacked him a little and he came to quickly. We lifted him up, wrapped the crew and got him to his little room."

Sonnenfeld spent the rest of the day in his hotel resting up and watching TV. "It was great," said



The new movie family (l to r) Anjelica Huston as Morticia, Raul Julia as Gomez (with "Thing" on his shoulder), Judith Malina as Granny Frump, Christina Ricci as Wednesday, Carel Struycken as Lurch, Christopher Lloyd as Fester and Jimmy Workman as Pugsley. Opening on November 22.

the impish, erstwhile director of photography on such films as *RAISING ARIZONA*, *MISERY* and *WHEN HARRY MET SALLY*, "cause I got to go home."

There was indeed little sinister in Sonnenfeld's brief but painful encounter with the floor. He had spent the night before struggling in his mind with a shot scheduled for the next morning, and had only fallen asleep fifteen minutes before his 5:30 a.m. wake-up call. The grinding and gnashing of teeth had already become a regular nighttime pursuit for him. He thought he was getting used to it.

But for Rudin, by then grappling with the likelihood that Orion might sell off his picture or, far worse, pull the plug on it, this was scary business. "I was worried about his health and I was worried about the movie," recalled Rudin. "What the hell is going to happen if he can't make it through two weeks? What's it going to be like in week six or sixteen? We had no idea it would get to be 21." Rudin said he pushed Sonnenfeld to pace himself.

Actually, Sonnenfeld maintained he had always known that directing was too horrible and gruesome an occupation to ever seriously pursue. "I don't recommend it," he said, dryly. "Making *THE ADDAMS FAMILY* was the longest thing I've ever done in my life. I've never committed to anything for eighteen months, except marriage. It's a time-consuming and horrifying process—but so is the rest of movie making. It takes so long to write the script and cast it. Every shot—in this case 900 individual shots—can take an hour to six hours to set up, light, and film."

Directing movies for Sonnenfeld was merely the means by which he sought to buy his freedom. "I wanted to direct for all the wrong reasons," said Sonnenfeld in his trailer while shooting sequences last April in an elaborate full-scale facade of the Addams' haunted house high atop a cold, blustery hill in Burbank. "And not just because being a director gets you a table

"I was not particularly a fan of the TV show, but a huge fan of the cartoons from *The New Yorker*. I love surrealism in humor."

- Director Barry Sonnenfeld -



Christina Ricci as Wednesday tries out her own camera angle as cinematographer-turned-director Barry Sonnenfeld plans a scene with Christopher Lloyd as Fester.

in all the best restaurants.

"I felt if I became a successful director, I could work less frequently and spend more time with my wife and my children. I'm basically a lazy person—a great starter but not much of a finisher. I don't feel I have a burning desire to make an important statement. I'm not an Oliver Stone. But I do have a point of view, which is that people should laugh a lot and be happy."

It is Sonnenfeld's ideas about family which, aside from the integral charm of the late Charles Addams' cartoons and, to a lesser extent, the '60s TV series, may prove to be one of *THE ADDAMS FAMILY*'s biggest saving graces. The plot of the movie concerns bald Uncle Fester's return to the macabre embrace of the family he had been severed from some 25 years earlier after becoming lost in the Bermuda Triangle. Fester is played by Christopher Lloyd, eschewing a flesh-toned skull cap for a deep razor cut. Claiming amnesia, Fester is revealed to have made his living during these lost years as a con artist. It is up to the family—wraithlike family matriarch Morticia (Anjelica Hus-

ton) Addams, her husband (and Fester's brother), the uninhibited and adoring Gomez (Raul Julia), Granny Frump (Judith Malina), the sorrowful Wednesday (Christina Ricci, last seen swimming off with accolades in *MERMAIDS*) and her mischievous brother Pugsley—to determine if he's genuine, and thus trustworthy of redemption.

Sonnenfeld and Rudin met on the set of *RAISING ARIZONA*, where Sonnenfeld's kibbitzing often became frantic in Rudin's company. Rudin said that as middle class, urban Jewish men from the East Coast, they shared an aesthetic sensibility and an outlook on life. It made, they both admit, for an interesting relationship. "Scott and I are sort of an odd couple," recounted Sonnenfeld (they have, in fact, been described as "The Sunshine boys"). "I spent a lot of my time on this production deliberately torturing him. Although we've only known each other well for a year, it feels like twenty."

Sonnenfeld got involved with *THE ADDAMS FAMILY* at the instigation of his agent, who promised the photographer he could get him a

directing job. "I'd always felt that as a cinematographer I was really a fellow filmmaker," said Sonnenfeld. "I had worked with first-time directors—Danny DeVito and Penny Marshall. I had seen how it was done. I felt most directors didn't realize the camera is their friend, and that it can be used to tell a story emotionally, and make a film happy or sad or funny. It wasn't just a recording device, and I knew that was what I could bring to a film. I knew I could direct—I'm a narrative, story-telling kind of guy."

Sonnenfeld's decision to land a directing job was an event marked, he noted, by the devotion of subsequent weekends to the consumption of memorably bad scripts. One of them was an early version of *THE ADDAMS FAMILY* screenplay, commissioned by Rudin and delivered by Caroline (EDWARD SCISSOR-HANDS) Thompson and Larry (BEETLEJUICE) Wilson. Sonnenfeld was at the Four Seasons Hotel in Los Angeles with his wife, in town color-correcting *WHEN HARRY MET SALLY*, and girding himself to prep *MISERY*, when he read the script for *THE ADDAMS FAMILY*. Underwhelmed, he called his agent and said he wasn't interested.

"It was not a good script at all," recalled Sonnenfeld. "The villains were cartoony. Thing walked around with a mirror, holding it upside down so he could look up women's dresses. There was a talking moose on the wall. The level of humor was third grade. And the plot was not endemic to Charles Addams' cartoons."

Sonnenfeld did, however, like the structure of the screenplay. He particularly approved of the idea of bringing Thing out of the box he had inhabited in the TV show. And indeed, as the script developed, Thing became more integral to the plot. "But overall," said Sonnenfeld, "It was just not hip. The words were very flat. I was not particularly a fan of the TV show, but a huge fan of the cartoons as they appeared in *The New Yorker*. I love surrealism in humor. Charles Addams always played with scale, and was visually acute.

The Addams Family

CHARLES ADDAMS

The story behind the late cartoon genius and his vision of the macabre.

By Robert T. Garcia

"Charles was able to marry an interest in a particular nineteenth-century architecture with an interest in death and graveyards and ghouls and ghosts and morbidity and sickness which he turned into a bizarre dance of death. Everyone knows how close death and comedy are. He was our Hans Holbein. It was an ancient Roman custom to have a person walking at the head of a funeral procession dressed as a skeleton. Charles embraced that with relish and in effect led our parade to death, as a comic figure disguised as a skeleton."

—Brandon Gill, editor at
The New Yorker

It was rough being a cartoon character in Charles Addams' cartoon graveyard. If you were an average man, you might be swallowed by snakes, have boiling lead poured on you while you were Christmas caroling, or see your neighbor send his pet hunting hawk after the pigeons in your rooftop coop. First appearing in *The New Yorker* in 1932, Addams' cartoons delved gleefully into the realm of dread and death. Against monsters, headhunters,

huge animals and giant insects, the people next door seem weak and helpless, lost in a world more dangerous and sillier than they ever dreamed.

Then, there was the family that appeared in his cartoons from 1935 to 1964 which became known as "The Addams Family." It was comprised of a delightfully ghoulish cast that trimmed a dead tree for Christmas, made a fire in the hearth to greet Santa Claus, built racks for the playroom, and had a huge picture window installed to more properly see the neighboring graveyard. The small body of work featuring The Family has almost overshadowed Addams' prodigious output of over 1,300 cartoons and watercolor paintings. The Family, whose images had roots in Addams' early life, somehow struck a vibrant chord in the American consciousness.

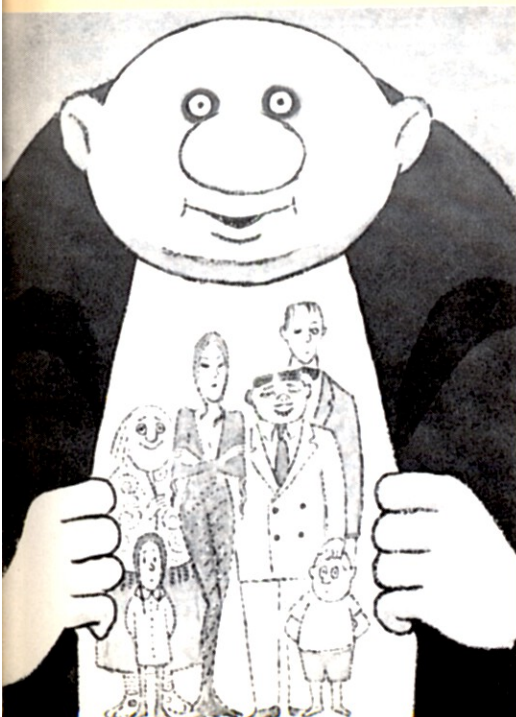
Born January 7, 1912, the son of a naval architect, Adams grew up in Westfield, New Jersey, an area populated with Victorian mansions and archaic graveyards. There, he came to love the world of death next door. "The part of his life that mattered desperately to him, which was already fixed when he was extremely young, was this business of cemeteries, undertakers, internal organs and body bags," said Brandon Gill, a longtime friend. "Those things—that he really and truly did relish—are obviously a manifestation of a preoccupation at adolescence. Fortunately for him, it struck an echo in all the rest of us. Much of which is a part of life that we participate in, but don't want to acknowledge."

Throughout Addams' childhood and into his adult life, his drawings were full of this imagery. "The springs of art for most people lie in childhood," Gill continued. "Robin Hood, knights in armor, automobiles, death and graveyards, Mark Twain, Huck Finn and all those things were tangled together in Charles' mind." But Addams' cartoons weren't only populated by Gothic and adolescent romances. As he got older, they grew to include the adult terrors of mechanization, mutation, murder, betrayal and sadism. Addams made us laugh at the uncomfortable



Addams at his New York apartment in the mid-'60s, with his collection of armor and Medieval crossbows, at the height of the ABC-TV show's popularity.

Addams' promo art for an exhibition of his work at New York's Nicholls Gallery. Noted gallery owner Barbara Nicholls of the design, "Addams was Fester."



truths of modern life through trappings considered safe and preposterous.

Addams first studied art at Colgate, then the University of Pennsylvania and finally the Grand Central Art School. At the age of 21, he found the home that would keep him well and happy for over fifty years, *The New Yorker* magazine. He worked there even during World War II, while he did animation for the Signal Corps Photographic Center on Park Avenue.

At *The New Yorker*, Addams' easy-going and gentle manner, cherubic smile and gleeful laugh won him friends like John O'Hara, Hugh Taylor, Frank Modell, Jim Stevenson and Joan Fontaine. He kept company with them at the magazine's haunts, restaurants like Costello's and Blakes's, and while attending Manhattan's society parties. Addams married three times: first to Barbara, the model for the beautiful raven-haired Morticia, (she has since married novelist John Hersey); then to a second Barbara, a lawyer who is now Lady Barbara Colyton; and finally, to Marilyn, who became his widow.

Though Addams' cartoons are full of mischievous children trying out various chemicals, tying down teachers, building racks, etc., Addams had none of his own. It

seemed dogs were more to his liking. In anecdotal fact, when he purchased his beloved dog, Alice, the store clerk warned him that she didn't like children. Immediately, Addams said, "Fine. I'll take her."

Addams traveled each day to his office at *The New Yorker*, because he liked to go someplace away from his home to work. His "cell," as the offices were called, was furnished with only a drafting table and a chair facing the window. Some magazines and rough sketches cluttered the room. He had no couch, and one day, while he was taking a nap stretched out on the floor, one of the office boys found him and ran down the hall shouting, "Addams is dead! Addams is dead!" The cartoonist locked his door for naps after that.

Addams loved to live up to audience expectations, actually marrying his third wife—she wearing black—in a pet cemetery. He also kept an embalming table in the living room of his New York "penthouse," a rooftop apartment under a huge ten-thousand gallon watertank, in a building across from the Dorsett Hotel on 54th St. The apartment also housed Addams' infamous huge medieval crossbow collection, his brass lizard collection and his one suit of Maximilian armor (circa 1505).

At his home in Westhampton, Addams kept his antique cars in a concrete garage next to his two-story summer house. There, at various times, were his 1926 Bugatti, 1933 Aston-Martin, 1973 Alfa-Romeo, and 1928 Mercedes-Benz, the latter given to him by playwright Philip Barry. The Mercedes was famous for having been driven around Europe by such notables as Sara and Gerald Murphy, Zelda and F. Scott Fitzgerald, Picasso and others.

Almost all of Addams' artwork was done expressly for publication, with only a few other pieces drawn as gifts. The size of his black and white washes ranged from about 13" x 18" to 24" x 30". His watercolors (66 covers for the magazine) were usually larger. His command of either medium is not readily apparent when you



Addams, age 70, with the centerpiece of his brass lizard collection, six years before his death from a heart attack on September 30, 1988, an eccentric with a unique slant on life.

see printed versions of his work, because reproducing washes and watercolors is very difficult and usually much of the depth and subtlety is lost. Only by seeing an original can Addams' skill be fully appreciated. Unfortunately, while his widow is negotiating to establish a permanent collection, there is no public display at this time. The only chance to see the originals is during the occasional exhibitions mounted by The Barbara Nicholls Gallery. The current one entitled "Favorite Haunts" will run this year from Halloween through January 12, 1992 at the National Academy of Design, 1083 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

The New York-based Nicholls Gallery specializes in the work of *New Yorker* artists, and handles the sale of Addams'

artwork whenever it becomes available. Owner Nicholls was once a staffer at the magazine until she created the gallery in 1974. She remembered that up until that time, Addams gave his art away free, while keeping the bulk of it under his bed or in his closet. Today Addams' cartoons command prices of \$4000-\$6000 apiece while his cover paintings go for \$6000-\$8000.

Addams' first one man show at the gallery on Halloween 1974 was a great success, warranting television coverage. The grand display of cartoons on exhibit included pumpkins hand-carved by Addams to the shape of each of his characters with painted faces.

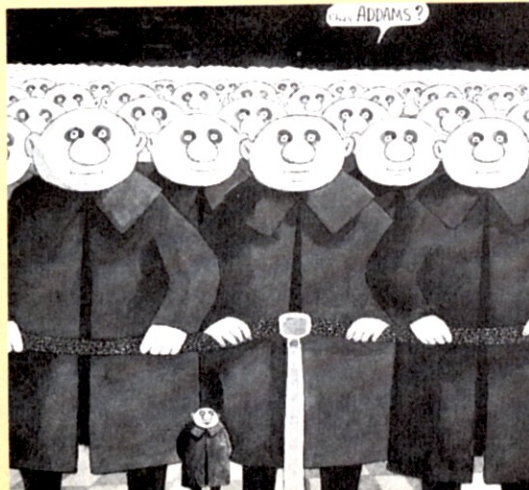
The popular success of the TV show that bore his name in the mid-'60s had made Addams one of the most popular cartoonists in America, though the TV incarnation never achieved the sophistication or wit of Addams' source material.

Addams had little to do with the show after initial consultations with producer David Levy in 1963. During its first run, Addams remarked to friends that he thought it was embarrassing, but as he got older, he saw more of the show in reruns, and Marilyn Addams told John Astin that his admiration for the series grew over the years. Addams was said to have heartily praised both Astin and Carolyn Jones. When Addams died of a heart attack in October of 1988, Astin spoke during the memorial service at the family's request. After the television show premiered in September of 1964, *The New Yorker* requested that the characters of *The Family* no longer appear in the magazine and Addams complied. The Family did not appear again until 1988.

Addams fathered a revolution in macabre art, melding the Gothic with modern day terrors. His ghastly Victorian houses were located across the street from suburban ranches. His strange creatures drove modern highways. The devil showed up at the corporate offices of Avis Rent-A-Car. The witch's gingerbread house from *Hansel & Gretel* had a list of ingredients on its side. No longer were monsters confined to the past. Gahan Wilson, today's foremost master of the macabre cartoon told *Newsweek* on the news of Addams' death, "He altered my cellular structure. When I was a kid, I'd look at Addams and something would happen to my brain."

Addams' cartoons enriched many who saw them hidden away amongst the urbane cartoons of *The New Yorker*. When you see a Kliban or a Gary Larson snake bulging in the center, remember that the inspiration came forty years ago from a young man from New Jersey. Addams created the template for the macabre cartoon. □

Addams' promo for the Nicholls Gallery, where his work drew throngs of TV fans.



Left: Christopher Lloyd as Fester in the new movie. Below: TV's Jackie Coogan.



Best of all, he was also very, very dark. There is something in all of us—certainly in me—that when you hear the screeching tires of two cars outside at night you feel a little disappointed if you don't hear the sound of metal rending. In the most horrible situations I always find something to laugh about."

Rudin hooked Sonnenfeld merely by explaining that the script was a first draft that could be changed and rewritten. "When I'm hired as a cinematographer," noted Sonnenfeld, "I'm usually sent a shooting script, and not a first draft. As a cinematographer, I had no idea how much one could change a first draft."

Rudin recalled that he had no problem casting Huston, Lloyd and Julia in the lead roles—each of them were first choices. "It wasn't that hard to cast," said Rudin. "They all wanted to do it. They were attracted to do it. They were very attracted to the characters. If you offer Al Pacino a cop movie and he says he won't do it, so okay, he'll do another cop movie. You ask Anjelica Huston if she wants to play Morticia Addams, it's not like it'll come along next year. It's now or never. She met Barry, we had breakfast, she liked him and what he had to say about it. He had a real idea for the movie. This was intimate, not the big splashy BATMAN or BEETLEJUICE version. It was going to be a domestic comedy, very funny and charming." Rudin and Sonnenfeld said they sought actors with stage experience to provide, in Sonnenfeld's terms, "a certain theatricality of performance."

The rewrite process did not go smoothly. Sonnenfeld found that as one draft ran into the next, the original writers became wary of the need to change plot points because of the ripple effect such changes would have in the rest of the structure. "They started to become too fond of their own words," said Sonnenfeld. "Their dialogue was always the weakest part of the script, which was punchline, setup, punchline."

"I wanted to make the script darker and more visual, less about the TV show and more about the Charles Addams car-

"I wanted to make the script darker and more visual, less about the TV show and more about the Charles Addams cartoons."

- Director Barry Sonnenfeld -



Sonnenfeld, producer Scott Rudin, and child stars Christina Ricci and Jimmy Workman, obviously pleased with their work, review a take on a video monitor.

toons," said Sonnenfeld. In fact, there are now perhaps twenty or so scenes in the film directly inspired by the cartoons, the rights to which Rudin secured for a hefty sum he won't divulge, and at the cost of the protective input of Addams' former wife Barbara Colyton.

Famous cartoons incorporated into the movie include a shot of members of the family atop their mansion, preparing to dump a boiling witches' cauldron onto a group of Christmas carolers below and a scene in which Fester files the spikes atop the gates around the Addams' mansion.

For help on the script, Sonnenfeld turned to Paul Rudnick, an established New York screenwriter, playwright and novelist. Rudin had worked with Rudnick and put his name forward as someone who could help bail them out. "He's funny and fast," said Rudin, "and he had experience writing for actors. When you have race horses like we had, you owe it to them to tailor the screenplay to their strengths."

Rudnick overhauled the entire screenplay, with rewriting continuing well into production. "The challenge was in setting the limits of the characters and the style," said Rudnick. "Some could be taken from the TV series but a lot of the work on the film was to go back to the original cartoons and capture an essence there that has made them into archetypes."

One of the things Sonnenfeld wanted to ensure from the start was that he would not spend his time during the production fretting about the camerawork. To free himself from worrying, he did something many still find odd: he hired Owen Roizman, who had photographed THE FRENCH CONNECTION, NETWORK and TOOTSIE. It was odd not because Roizman was, according to veteran production designer Richard MacDonald, "an awful cameraman, an awful man, too, a boring person. Didn't have an eye for anything, didn't see anything," but because Roizman could only sign on for ten of what would become a 21-week shoot. It was, said MacDonald, not only virtually unheard of for a director of

photography to intentionally shoot less than half of a movie, but "totally immoral of him [Roizman] to agree to such a thing at all."

This was not, however, an opinion shared by either Sonnenfeld or Rudin, who hired Gale Tattersal to take over from Roizman. Tattersal, whose credits include WILD ORCHID, HOMEBOY, and most recently, Alan Parker's THE COMMITMENTS, said that although he admires Roizman's work, he also found the arrangement more than passing odd. "I found that most surprising," said Tattersal. "If you take on a commitment, you see it through to the end. It's not like a bus that you just get off half-way through, when something else comes along."

"What I made sure of was to hire someone so much better than I was," said Sonnenfeld, explaining his decision to have Roizman. "It was very important to me to have a great director of photography. It was great to have someone who is brilliant to start out with. Whenever you're nervous, it's so easy to fall back on to something you know well, and I didn't want that. I didn't want someone I could push around because I would stop paying attention to the actors."

"Owen did virtually all of the big sequences," explained Rudin, "and certainly did enough to determine the style of it. His work is extraordinary, first-rate. You'll never know what's his and what's Gale's." Tattersal concurred. "Owen was to have done all the interiors," said Tattersal, "and as that represents a style change anyway, they didn't see any harm in that. Films being what they are, though, that all changed, and it ended up being a lot more tricky than one would imagine."

Whoever was responsible for what, the experience of letting go was, for Sonnenfeld, profound. For others, like MacDonald, it was astounding. "Barry surprised me by how visually dumb he was," recounted MacDonald. "Until he looked through the camera, he couldn't see it. He's been helpless at it. The editor called him a stills photographer."

Though hardly as exuberant

in his self-criticism—MacDonald is a delightful British gentleman who can be quite crusty when so inclined—Sonnenfeld concurred. “Since directing, I’ve become so unusual,” he said. “I start talking about using zoom lenses. As a cinematographer I *never* used a zoom lens. I always wanted to dolly in, and now I’m telling the cinematographer, ‘Wouldn’t a zoom be faster?’ I’ve become my worst nightmare—someone more concerned with the acting than with whether a pristine or perfectly lit image can be obtained. As a director of photography I was anal about framing and lighting.”

Though Sonnenfeld didn’t get things moving visually in his movie, he did, at least, get Thing moving—in a fashion. The movie might indeed have been called “Thing Unbound,” had effects envisioned for Thing worked out as anticipated. Alas, like the Addams mansion gate, which had initially been conceived as a versatile, high-tech concoction of hundreds of constantly opening and closing gates powered hydraulically—and which ultimately drew its power from low-tech pieces of string and rods—Thing never quite got off the ground. Not, at least, in the purely mechanical sense.

“With Thing,” explained Sonnenfeld, who resorted largely to extensive rotoscoping of magician Chris Hart’s hand to get Thing up and running, “I was able to put the camera low and wide and track. I knew that whenever you put a camera near the ground and move it, it’s very dynamic, very funny. It’s like the baby stuff in *RAISING ARIZONA*. If you want it handsome you should shoot it with long lenses at normal height. Thing gave me the chance to move the camera.”

Unfortunately, it did not enable Sonnenfeld to step up the pace of production. *THE ADDAMS FAMILY*, already long in the making by most standards, went five weeks over schedule. Although most directors would have killed for the freedom 120 days of shooting might have afforded them,

“I’ve become my worst nightmare, someone more concerned with acting than with whether a pristine, perfectly lit image can be had.”

— Director Barry Sonnenfeld —



Sonnenfeld directs Raul Julia as Gomez, getting a scalp massage from “Thing,” the hand of off-camera magician Christopher Hart, disguised with makeup.

Sonnenfeld said he did not relish the added time. “I don’t think most directors would want to still be doing a film by day 120, unless they are Jim Cameron,” said Sonnenfeld. “It was to a certain extent the nature of the film that it would take so long. In fact, the original schedule we went to Orion with was seventeen or eighteen weeks and we shot for 21. We were asked to cut it down, and we tried to do it faster, but were unable to. We added a bunch of scenes that weren’t in the original script. As the film developed, we realized there were characters we wanted on screen for more time.”

There were, however, other reasons attributed for the interminable shoot—the same that were said to account for Sonnenfeld’s mechanical difficulties with Thing and the gate. According to MacDonald, special effects man Chuck Comisky and others who toiled on *THE ADDAMS FAMILY*, the production was initially undermined by a dearth of prep time, and by the inadequate use of whatever time was unavailable. “It wasn’t at all well planned,” said MacDonald, and to an extent,

Sonnenfeld agreed. “There was a great deal of chaos, of last minute scrambling,” he said.

Another difficulty crew members encountered was Sonnenfeld’s often excessive reluctance to be tied down to decisions he could not change at the last moment. Sonnenfeld’s indecisiveness, observed costume designer Ruth Myers, reduced the business of directing, for Sonnenfeld, to a process of endlessly answering questions. “I heard him say he never realized he’d have to make constant decisions all the time,” recalled Myers. “In fact, he wouldn’t have been answering questions if he said to people, ‘I trust you,’ which he only did later on in the production. That was a trap he put himself into.

“I think that Barry was so overwhelmed by the bigness of this that he was resistant to suggestions,” said Myers. “He and Scott wanted to keep control. By the end, of course, they realized no one was going to steal their glory. The decisions were theirs, but they had to let you do your job.”

MacDonald wasn’t quite so charitable. “What a *stupid* way of carrying on. He really had

no conception of what a director is supposed to do. You are supposed to make up your mind at the beginning of a picture of what you are going to see on the screen. All these mindless changes during the production stemmed from his own inability to visualize. Time was wasted because he never made up his mind. He didn’t use the time he had to build the film in his head.”

Sonnenfeld and Rudin did, however, spend inordinate amounts of time visualizing the kind of film they did *not* want to see. “It was strange because in the beginning, every fitting they came to, they would hit their fists against the walls and say, ‘We don’t want this to look like a costume movie,’” said Myers. “I’d say, ‘But it *is* a costume film. This is not kitchen sink cinema.’ I couldn’t get it into their heads what I was talking about until the end. All they knew were things they had seen that they didn’t want.”

Not surprisingly, Sonnenfeld was grateful when principal photography on *THE ADDAMS FAMILY* ended early last May. And even MacDonald believes that with the right editing, the film will be worth seeing. “This was more of a trial than it was fun,” acknowledged Sonnenfeld. “It was a difficult film, especially being a first film. But I know what I have on my hands now. I think we have an incredibly warm and loving comedy. What will surprise everyone, I think, is the depth of emotion we have achieved.”

Sonnenfeld is convinced, in fact, that *THE ADDAMS FAMILY* has all the makings of a hit Broadway musical. He, however, does not anticipate taking this particular show on the road. He said he was paid very little for his work on this picture and hopes to recoup some of his losses both by shooting commercials and eventually holding out for far more on his next feature, should there be one. What that feature may be, Sonnenfeld doesn’t even want to think about right now.

“There is some screwball stuff I’d eventually like to share. Right now, though, I just want to go home.” □

The Addams Family

PRODUCTION DESIGN

Richard MacDonald, raising the roof, among other Gothic constructions.

By Sheldon Teitelbaum

Richard MacDonald is a builder, which is probably why he was hired as production designer for THE ADDAMS FAMILY. It helped, of course, that he had worked for director John Schlesinger, who had just done PACIFIC HEIGHTS for THE ADDAMS FAMILY producer Scott Rudin. MacDonald likes to build sets full scale and isn't keen on models, he said, because a few small companies like ILM in Marin County and Boss Films in Southern California have monopolized the field, making costs prohibitively expensive and, he believes, mucking up the business of filmmaking.

"You have to go to them because they hire all the model makers," explained MacDonald, the veteran British production designer, who has worked on such films as ALTERED STATES, JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR, MARATHON MAN, and THE RUSSIA HOUSE. "But you have no control over what they do."

It proved impossible, however, to find an appropriate house to stand in for the Addams' mansion on location, a search that MacDonald noted was a source of wasted time and money for the production. Producer Scott Rudin and Sonnenfeld dispatched some seven location scouts to scour the East Coast for a suitably Gothic American haunted house. That no such house was ever found didn't surprise MacDonald. "Charles Addams," he

noted, "had never really drawn one identifiable Addams House. Rather, he drew in whatever he needed." MacDonald designed his own version, incorporating the salient features of all Addams' constructs. The result, however, was a tad over the top even for the pretensions of turn-of-the-century American domicile architecture. "It was a bit more cartoony than real," said MacDonald, "so we built it."

They also argued about it, said MacDonald, interminably. Only MacDonald did not, he recounted, have the luxury of waiting for Sonnenfeld and Rudin to pin down such issues as whether to shoot the film entirely out of doors, as was once Sonnenfeld's intention. MacDonald knew he had to get the two-sided facade of the mansion up, and that it would not wait for the last moment.

"Look," said MacDonald, "I had to build something. You can't get these buildings done in seconds, so I went ahead and built it. If I had waited to get it approved or explain every bit of it . . . I mean, there was no time to do anything else." MacDonald built his 75-foot-high facade of the Addams family mansion for \$150,000—not much more, really, than a model might have cost.

Though British, MacDonald was familiar with the Charles Addams cartoons that would have to serve as his main visual source on THE ADDAMS FAMILY. The cartoons had run in the British satirical journal *Punch* while MacDonald had



MacDonald and the exterior of the Addams family mansion, constructed on a hill overlooking Burbank.

been working for the London office of an American advertising firm. He relied upon them heavily, though more for inspiration than as actual blueprints. An accomplished artist and architect, MacDonald was up to providing his own.

MacDonald's stand-out set on THE ADDAMS FAMILY was surely his towering facade, built at Toluca Lake on a mountain overlooking Burbank, which made the cover of a local community paper, *The Toluca*. A hundred feet away, MacDonald built the castle turret from which members of the family prepare to pour a boiling witch's brew upon Christmas carolers below, and from which Fester and Gomez drive golf balls into the family cemetery—an indoor set located elsewhere. Culled from Addams' cartoons are an assortment of gargoyles and decorative creatures, for instance, bats with human faces and menacing cat familiars.

Although MacDonald found working with Sonnenfeld and Rudin to be occasionally trying, he said his nine-month stint on THE ADDAMS FAMILY was both fun and fecund. Though much money was wasted on indecision and on sets and gimmicks that didn't pan out, enough got to the screen, he noted, to make THE ADDAMS FAMILY worth seeing. "If Barry and Scott have the sense to cut the stuff that didn't work," he said, "it should be quite a film." □

MacDonald designed the facade (inset) for exteriors when no real location could be found.



The Addams Family

The story behind the macabre '60s sitcom exhumed for remaking by Hollywood.

By Robert T. Garcia

Raised on the good moral virtues of *FATHER KNOWS BEST*, or the caring ethnic boisterousness of *MAKE ROOM FOR DADDY*, or even the outlandishness of the *BEVERLY HILLBILLIES*, television viewers knew that every night on prime time TV, plain, good old horse sense, hard work and American values would be professed by all their favorite stars. Then came *THE ADDAMS FAMILY*.

When the Addams' son wanted to find a part-time job to earn his own money, his parents were crushed, wanting him to follow family tradition and live off his allowance. When the boy wanted to join the Cub Scouts, they called in a psychiatrist! Their daughter had a pet black widow spider named Homer, and never went anywhere without Marie Antoinette, her headless doll. The mother raised dangerous man-eating plants, worked vigorously at modernistic paintings (mostly all black), and encouraged her children to play with dynamite caps. The father delighted in *losing* millions on the stock market, playing with his toy trains or necking in the living room with his wife. *THE ADVENTURES OF OZZIE*



John Astin and Carolyn Jones as Morticia and Gomez Addams, refreshingly sexual in the mid-'60s context of television's relatively repressed, warped moral code.

AND HARRIET it wasn't.

Premiering in 1964, the same year as *BEWITCHED*, *THE ADDAMS FAMILY* never achieved the ratings or popular success of its sister show on ABC (which became the network's highest rated series ever), but immediately entered the realm of cult chic. It inspired Siouxsie Sioux, of the punk band Siouxsie and the Banshees to hold up Morticia Addams as her role model. It joined the dance craze of the late '60s with the single, "The Lurch," recorded by Ted Cassidy, who became the show's most popular character as its towering butler. And in critics' eyes, it far surpassed other genre shows that year: *MY LIVING DOLL*, *VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA*, and *THE MUNSTERS*, as well as most of the sitcoms of the period. Proving far hipper than anything else being broadcast, *THE ADDAMS FAMILY* has remained on the air in syndication since its cancellation after two seasons in 1966, and still airs in major markets. "Even today," said star John Astin, "people pull me off the street and call me Gomez."

The black and white show was the brainchild of independent producer David Levy, a former programming director



The TV family (l to r), Lisa Loring as Wednesday, Jackie Coogan as Fester, Carolyn Jones as Morticia, Blossom Rock as Granmama, John Astin as Gomez, Ted Cassidy as Lurch and Ken Weatherwax as Pugsley, on ABC from 1963-1964.

The Addams Family

THE MAN BEHIND THE MUSIC

Composer Vic Mizzy scored the series and came up with the trademark of its infectious, finger-snapping theme song.

By Randall D. Larson

One of the most durable and recognizable aspects of the original ADDAMS FAMILY television show was its catchy theme song. With slapstick deadpans, cast members appeared staring corpse-like at the camera, snapping their fingers in time with the song that every child of mid-'60s monsterdom knew by heart:

*"They're creepy and they're kooky,
Mysterious and spooky,
They're altogether ooky,
The Addams Family . . ."*

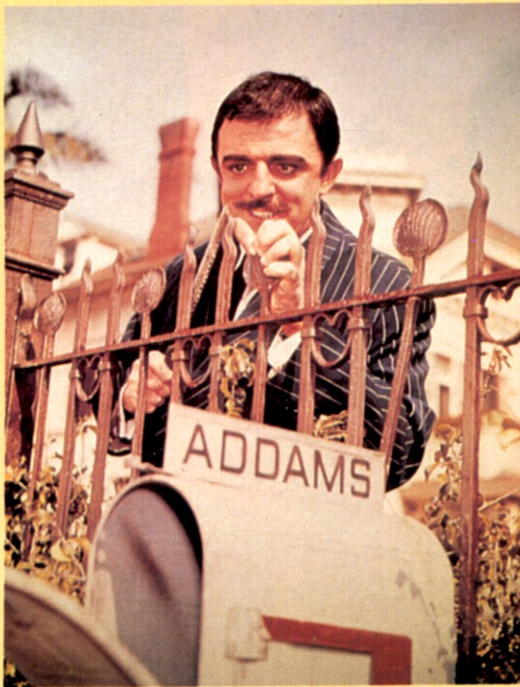
The song, and the rest of the series' background scoring, was created by Vic Mizzy, a New York songwriter who came to Hollywood in 1963 to score William Castle's THE NIGHT WALKER. That same year, Mizzy would

begin to score the show that would really give him a name in Hollywood: THE ADDAMS FAMILY. As he would with GREEN ACRES a year later, Mizzy created the show's highly identifiable musical ambience with the slimmest of resources. For THE ADDAMS FAMILY, the entire series music

was composed with just a bass clarinet, bass violin, drum, and harpsicord. And those unforgettable finger snaps.

"Filmways had wanted to use canned music for THE ADDAMS FAMILY pilot," said Mizzy. "But [producer] David Levy respected me as a composer because I had a lot of big song hits. I did the presentation pilot for nothing, just because he was a dear friend. After the pilot sold, I was signed to do the whole score."

According to one of the show's original producers, the late lyricist, Johnny Mercer, actually wrote the theme song's lyrics, as a favor to Mizzy, without credit, but Mizzy denied that this was the case. "They'd asked five lyric writers to write the words," said Mizzy. "But none of them could come up with anything. I'm the author of the words and the music, and it's



Mizzy worked closely with John Astin, shown in a gag from the cartoons, and the other actors in developing musical motifs.

copyrighted to me."

In addition to writing the theme song, Mizzy also directed THE ADDAMS FAMILY title sequence. As he would do with GREEN ACRES, his other big TV hit theme, Mizzy suggested the visual opening as well as its accompanying music. "I came up with the snapping of the fingers," said Mizzy. "What was important was having the cast do it. That was the whole secret. I have a wild imagination for creating not only the music and lyrics, but also the visual camera work. I've done it on most of my movies."

Mizzy's snapping fingers theme became a trademark for the characters that even the new Paramount feature film chose to repeat. "The music had a lot to do with its success," said Mizzy. "It had great scripts, great actors, and I think the music really pushed the thing. It gave it style."

Mizzy said he coached actors John Astin and Carolyn Jones on specific ways their characters should walk and move, so that the music could work with their per-

formances to create a more effective characterization. "John Astin didn't realize it, but I was always playing this theme for Gomez that he walked to," recalled Mizzy. "Carolyn Jones, who was Morticia, had her own theme and I told her how to walk across the floor so the melody would match what she was doing." All of the show's characters, including Lurch, Uncle Fester, even Thing, the hand-in-the-box, had their own peculiar themes which Mizzy would reprise when they made their appearance in each episode.

All the music, from the main theme to subordinate themes and incidental cues, were scored for the same four-piece ensemble. One of the four musicians was Mizzy himself. "I played harpsichord, and I also sang the main title," said Mizzy. "I overdubbed myself four times. I'm the guy who sings it!"

Unlike many television shows of the mid 1960's, which compiled music libraries out of episode scores and reused that same music throughout subsequent episodes, Mizzy composed an original score for each ADDAMS FAMILY episode. "The music never stopped," he said. "I would write sometimes as much as twenty minutes of music for an episode, which is about as close to wall-to-wall scoring as a half-hour TV program comes. A lot of scores written in the business are just wall-to-wall noise. There's nothing thematic. Can anybody hum the theme to L.A.LAW?"

The ADDAMS FAMILY feature film originally chose to do without Mizzy's distinctive theme music. Producer Scott Rodin reportedly wanted a contemporary rock and roll score, and signed newcomer Marc Shaiman (MISERY, SCENES FROM A MALL) to come up with the music. But Paramount, which bought the picture from Orion, insisted that Mizzy's music be used. "The picture will die if it goes out with a rock and roll score," said Mizzy, who added that he would have loved to have been more involved in the new film. "I really wanted to score the thing," he said. "I know THE ADDAMS FAMILY." □



Vic Mizzy

“They were going to build the show around the butler, and I would play the butler. There were no character names, or anything.”

- Actor John Astin -



Filming Carolyn Jones, John Astin and Jackie Coogan at Hollywood's General Service Studios, coincidentally the production base of the new big-budget remake.

at NBC, inspired by the macabre cartoons of artist Charles Addams as seen in the pages of *The New Yorker* magazine. Addams had been approached by others about licensing his characters and had refused to do so. Levy arranged a meeting with Addams at the Plaza Hotel in Manhattan where the main topic of conversation was the work of Addams' longtime friend, novelist John O'Hara, with whom Levy had worked on television. With Addams made to feel comfortable about collaborating, a deal was struck to develop the cartoons for television.

Levy hired television writers Ed James and Seaman Jacobs to write a pilot episode for a series based on Addams' work. Jacobs remembered being charged with the task of delivering the work to Levy. "I would always have some kind of an Addams gimmick," said Jacobs. "Once, I left it and hung a big imitation spider [on the doorjamb], started it swinging, and rang the doorbell. One time, I slipped it under the door with some kind of death threat. Another time—I was smoking cigars in those days—I kept puffing until I filled the entrance with smoke. That almost knocked me off."

Levy brought the series concept to Filmways, the production company responsible for 1963's hottest comedy show on television, *THE BEVERLY HILLBILLIES*. Martin Ransohoff, chairman of the board, and Al Simon, president of Filmways' television arm, took it to CBS, where they had sold both *THE BEVERLY HILLBILLIES* and *MR. ED*. Ransohoff thought *THE ADDAMS FAMILY* would be a shoo-in at CBS and said he was shocked when the network turned it down, choosing instead to develop Universal's rival series *THE MUNSTERS*.

After NBC also turned down the show, Levy pitched *THE ADDAMS FAMILY* to ABC, acting out each of the characters' parts at the network's west coast offices for an audience consisting of development executives Harve Bennett and Doug Kramer, and programming executives Len Goldberg and Edgar Scherick. Levy's reportedly bravura performance led ABC to give Filmways the go-ahead to shoot a pilot. Bennett termed ABC the "second and a half" network at the time, trying to build a larger market share under Scherick's guidance with what Bennett called "wild-ass programming, stunt shows," such as *BEWITCHED* and *BATMAN*, shows too daring, or possibly too silly, for the other networks.

First cast was John Astin, one of the stars of Filmways'

con-men comedy film *THE WHEELER DEALERS* (1963). "The way it was first explained," Astin said, "they were going to build the show around the butler, and I would play the butler. At that time, there were no [character] names or anything. That sounded kind of improbable to me, and later that day, I received a call from Levy. He wanted me to play the father of the family."

Astin was wary. "I was somewhat suspicious of anything that was derived from cartoons," he said. "A comic strip is different, because they

have stories. But there were no stories in the cartoons. They were just one-shot slices of life. They conveyed a great deal, but if you considered them one frame of the film, it was hard to continue the film. For example, [in the cartoon where] Fester is waving the car ahead with the truck coming down the hill, you'd have a crash and people getting killed. That would not be palatable; certainly not to the '60s audience. There is a certain unfortunate bloodlust in audiences today. Who knows what they will go for?"

Only Morticia had been

THE GENESIS OF "THING"

"Thing," the disembodied and ever helpful "handservant" of the Addams', who plays such a key role in the action of Paramount's new movie version of the series, was created for the original show by executive producer David Levy based on two of Charles Addams' cartoons. In one cartoon, Addams envisioned a record player with real arms and in another he depicted the gate of the Addams Family home with a sign that read "Beware of Thing."

Always listed in the credits as played by "himself," Thing was acted on the set by Ted Cassidy, who also played Lurch, the family's butler with Frankensteinian proportions. Mitch Persons, a

script writer for the series, recalled that, "Very few people realized what a good actor Cassidy was. You could always tell when it was Cassidy [acting as Thing] because he gave it a personality. That was all Ted Cassidy's invention."

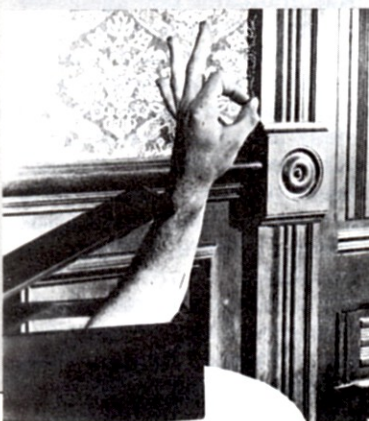
When Cassidy's Lurch

appeared in the same shot with Thing, or when Cassidy wasn't available, Thing was played by assistant director Jack Voglin, at 6'3", almost as big as Cassidy himself. Explained Herbert Browar, the co-founder of Filmways Television, the company that made the show for ABC, who acted as its associate producer, "We always shot [Thing] at the end of the day. We wouldn't keep Cassidy around because he cost us money."

On the TV show, Thing always emerged from a box, strategically placed wherever it was needed on the set, a relatively simple effect. Effects for the new movie liberate the character to roam at will.

Robert T. Garcia

"Thing," often performed by Ted Cassidy.





Carolyn Jones as Morticia (left) also doubled in the role of Ophelia Frump (above), Morticia's blonde, blithe, spinster sister. Jones' form-fitting garb as Morticia, even without its tentacles, rendered her all but immobile on the set.

named in the Addams cartoons. The names for Gomez, Lurch, Granmama, Pugsley, Wednesday, Friday and Fester were all suggested by Addams for the show. Astin worked with Levy on the creation of the father, dubbed Gomez. "We had a number of conversations," said Astin. "Addams suggested names, and we chose one of them. I suggested Gomez' romantic demeanor. In a lot of ways [Gomez] was an extension of me. I got to sort of live out my wishes in the show, which was a kick."

Bennett recalled that some executives at ABC weren't convinced Astin was right for the role until the pilot was delivered a month later. ABC also insisted that a "star" be connected to the project and Bennett said everybody wanted it to be Carolyn Jones, nominated for an Academy Award for her role in *THE BACHELOR PARTY* (1957). Bennett was a friend of Jones and her

husband, TV producer Aaron Spelling, and was asked to approach Spelling in order to enlist his aid in selling Jones on the idea—before ABC went to her agent.

"[Spelling] was wildly enthused," said Bennett. "He thought it would be a fabulous thing for her. She had not done comedy, and was very skilled at it from their theatre days back in Dallas. He jumped up and down as if he thought of the show, he was so excited. So Aaron became our 'agent' for making the Carolyn Jones deal. [Carolyn] was put off by it at first. She thought it might turn out to be tacky. But the clear-cut association with Addams and *The New Yorker*, which she much admired, gave her the feeling of security that she was doing a class piece of material."

Former basketball player and sports announcer, Ted Cassidy lucked into the role of Lurch. He had come from

“There were so many heads and headaches involved, I don't know who created it. It was like Topsy, it grew. Time was the pressure.”

— Producer Nat Perrin —

Texas to Hollywood a few weeks before casting had begun, and left his photograph and resume at a number of production offices. Finding no work, Cassidy returned to his wife and children back in Texas. The casting director at Filmways remembered Cassidy and showed his picture to director Arthur Hiller, who flew Cassidy in to "read" for the part. "I said, 'Fine. That's the guy!'" recalled Hiller, who went on to a distinguished career as a director of feature films, including *THE AMERICANIZATION OF EMILY* (1964), and *LOVE STORY* (1970). Noted Hiller, "[It was remarkable] finding someone in Texas to play this part."

Jackie Coogan, the child star of the 1921 classic *THE KID*, reportedly came in to audition with a giant walrus moustache. When he was told that Fester was bald, Coogan went home and shaved off all the hair on his head. When Filmways dressed up the top five applicants for Fester, to see how they looked, Coogan got the part, and it revitalized his largely moribund career.

With casting complete late in February, 1964, Filmways and Levy had less than a month to produce something for ABC to look at and buy. Time permitted the filming of just a short reel, rather than a full half-hour episode. Filmways chief Martin Ransohoff recommended Hiller as director. "Getting Hiller was considered a major coup," said Bennett. "Arthur had already achieved a certain eminence in feature pictures. The line between television and features in those days was an uncrossable one. Once you had made a feature picture, it was a tremendous stigma to go back. I can't remember any other feature directors that did pilots for us."

Filmways secured a leftover mansion set from MGM's *THE UNSINKABLE MOLLY BROWN* (1964) on which to film the fifteen-minute presentation reel. Recalled ABC programming executive Edgar Scherick, "There wasn't much of a story on the demonstrator. There was the hand in the mailbox. Arthur [Hiller] did 26 takes on that. Then the hand inside. And then we introduced the characters, showing all the different aspects of the Addams Family." The demo reel, shot from James and Jacobs' pilot script, was later augmented with more gags to serve as the series' first episode. Production on the demo was so rushed that Jerry Shepard, an assistant film editor at Filmways, worked more than 24 hours straight to get it finished, taking it to the airport to get it to New York the next morning. Shepard's diligence earned him a promotion to film editor when the show sold.

It was up to Herbert Brower, co-founder of Filmways Television and associate producer on all their shows, to start up production. Filmways built the Addams Family mansion (000 Cemetery Ridge and its environs) on what is now Stage 3/8 at Hollywood's General Service Studios. The huge stage was cut in half by Filmways, and a portion was dedicated to *THE ADDAMS FAMILY*. Filmways also shot *MR. ED* and *THE BEVERLY HILLBILLIES* at the studio and Orion Pictures returned there to shoot the new *ADDAMS FAMILY* feature film.

Production hit a snag when Ralph Levy, the producer in charge of script acquisition for *THE ADDAMS FAMILY*, left to honor a commitment at 20th Century-Fox. Series creator and executive producer David Levy had wanted to use

pilot scripters James and Jacobs to write the show but they were unavailable because they had signed an exclusive contract to write F-TROOP at Warner Bros. Nat Perrin, a former writer for the Marx Bros, whose credits included Eddie Cantor's KID MILLIONS (1934) and SONG OF THE THIN MAN (1947), was brought in by associate producer Herb Browar on the recommendation of Filmways' GREEN ACRES's writer Jay Summers. Perrin was asked to write two scripts in just six days so Filmways could start shooting, and on the strength of those was hired to produce the show.

"Nat became our biggest asset," said Browar. "He took hold of the whole show. He started getting out assignments and knocking out the scripts." It wasn't unusual for a writer to be hired as producer. In fact, it was Filmways' company policy. "The producer of almost all situation comedy shows had to be a writer," said Perrin. "What's there to produce? A script. The cast is usually set. The sets are set. The thrust of the show is set. They needed a person to take responsibility for the weekly script. Once the general concept is agreed on, it's the scripts that keep it alive."

Perrin added new material to the presentation reel, and director Al Joslyn shot the additional footage for the premiere episode. Though execu-

tive producer David Levy is credited as the show's "creator," Filmways executives stressed that the show's development was truly a group effort. Said Perrin, "I don't know who created it. It was like Topsy. It grew. And there were so many heads and headaches involved. Time really was the pressure."

Time magazine's reaction to the pilot episode, aired on September 18, 1964, was gratifying. "The props are first-rate, but the people are even better. Beautiful Carolyn Jones plays Morticia with a chilling verve..." Filmways veteran Ed Ilou served as the show's art director. The props, including a two-headed turtle, bear rug, swordfish head—with Cousin Frump's leg sticking out, moosehead with mismatched antlers, and Cleopatra, Morticia's African strangler, man-eating plant, were fabricated by set decorator Ruby Levitt (nominated for an Oscar for her sets on THE SOUND OF MUSIC).

Perrin selected scripts from among story premises submitted by freelance writers, a quarter page or, at most, a full-page in length. Writers that were selected developed the script in a story conference with Perrin. "As a writer, you were entitled to a rough draft, a second draft and a polish," said Browar. "Nat would work with the writers until he got as much as he could out of their script. Then, Nat would punch it up. He had this unusual, crazy way of looking at things, almost like the Addams Family. He was terrific. I used to go up to his office once in a while. His secretary would be in the room and he would be pacing back and forth acting out all the roles. She would be taking it all down."

One character not found in the Addams' cartoons was Cousin Itt, added to the family by Perrin. Itt was a short ball of fur with a bowler hat and dark sunglasses who lived in the chimney. Played by Felix Silla, who later went on to play Twiki in BUCK ROGERS OF THE TWENTYFIFTH CENTURY, Itt was always com-



Carolyn Jones and John Astin pose on the set at Filmways with the scriptwriters of "Cousin Itt's Problem" (l to r) Ed Ring, Carol Henning and Mitch Persons.

pletely unintelligible to everyone except his relatives who understood his every word. The voice was Perrin's, who spoke gibberish on tape, run back at high speed.

In developing the show, Astin claimed he was instrumental in fleshing out the character of Gomez. "I wanted to express through Gomez a very positive feeling about life itself," said Astin, whose trademark in the role included his intense examination of the stock market ticker tape, his engaging leer at Morticia, and his boundless enthusiasm for jumping into a fencing match with his wife; all brought off with a maniacal glee. Astin's one regret about the show was its use of a laughtrack. "Sometimes they would try to get me to read my lines as though I were reading it for an audience," said Astin. "There were some technically inclined people who wanted a bigger laugh behind my lines. I just wanted to play the part. I'm glad I did."

A big part of the charm of Gomez was the obviously sexual appreciation he had for his wife, Morticia, breaking new ground for television, where sitcom couples regularly slept in separate beds. "We were the first full-fledged married couple on television," said Astin. "We were the first couple on television who could have had children. I remember when I saw A FISH CALLED WANDA, I said, 'Those bums [Jamie Lee Curtis and the amorous John Cleese] stole our routine.'" The routine got THE ADDAMS FAMILY

some bad press. The National Association for Better Radio and Television dismissed the show for "its suggestive humor and double-meaning dialogue." But Filmways never got any flack from ABC about it. If the network had objected, Browar guaranteed he would have heard of it.

Episodes were filmed on a four-day production schedule. The first day the cast read the script with Perrin and the director. Perrin remembered those days as some of his favorite times on the show. "I loved the company," said Perrin. "Everyone in the company was a pro. They were charming, lovely, amusing people. We joked and exchanged notions. Even with troubled scripts, where we were a little unhappy, I would always say, 'Alright, I'll rewrite that.'" The second day, the company rehearsed and blocked the scenes. The last two days were for shooting, without a studio audience, using only one camera.

Carolyn Jones and Ted Cassidy reported to the set a few hours earlier on shooting days to put on their makeup. Shooting days usually lasted about ten hours, and afterwards, the show's principal actors and Perrin met at about seven p.m. in Carolyn Jones' dressing room. There, they discussed the day's shooting and if there were problems, Perrin would do the necessary rewrites at home that night.

One matter had to be settled early on in production, the cause of a meeting between associate producer Herb Bro-

Astin and Jones with midget Felix Silla as Cousin Itt, a diminutive mop of hair that all but steals the new feature film.





John Astin, Jackie Coogan and Carolyn Jones, bob for apples, sitcom humor that never quite lives up to the sly sophistication of the Charles Addams originals.

“Carolyn Jones was put off by it at first. But the association with The New Yorker gave her a feeling she was doing class material.”

- ABC exec Harve Bennett -

war and Jones, who requested a private bathroom be attached to her dressing room. When Browar pointed out the expense and the fact that a public restroom was not far from the sound stage, Jones stopped him and asked him to sit down and watch her. She then shuffled Morticia-like across his office floor, her legs constricted by her gown. Noted Browar, “It would have taken her an hour to get there and an hour to get back.” Browar called in the wardrobe woman to redesign Morticia’s dress, undoing a couple of flaps so

Jones could walk normally. “She still got her bathroom,” added Browar.

During the second season, Filmways decided to use the same production crew on both *THE ADDAMS FAMILY* and *MR. ED*. The crew would shoot *MR. ED* on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, and *THE ADDAMS FAMILY* on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Filmways then only needed a separate prop man and wardrobe person for each of the shows. Over the course of its two seasons, the veteran lineup of directors chosen for

THE ADDAMS FAMILY was impressive, including Sidney Lanfield who directed *THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES* (1939), Jerry Hopper, who directed *THE ATOMIC CITY* (1952), and went on to do episodes of *GET SMART*, and Arthur Lubin, who directed Universal’s 1943 *PHANTOM OF THE OPERA* and also directed *MR. ED* for Filmways. Pilot director Arthur Hiller was also called back to direct a number of episodes and Nat Perrin made his directing debut on the show.

Surprisingly, for a show known for its endearing penchant for the macabre, the emphasis in its storylines and characterization was on love, harmony and family values. It was Filmways Television president Al Simon who insisted that the family members be

treated like real people who were doing what they thought was right. Perrin noted that on *THE ADDAMS FAMILY*, “No character ever said anything against anyone.”

“Nat [Perrin] would complain there were not enough conflicts in the family so there wasn’t enough to write about,” said Astin. “But that wasn’t an impediment. That was the cliché in other television shows. The mother and father would always bicker. The children would always have problems with the parents.”

Noted Perrin, “Instead of the bickering and the jealousies and the quarrels, there was a family unit that was ideal. I held it up as a model and I felt it would be different than the same old ‘father is a god-damned fool’ kind of show. [The format] wasn’t easy to get comedy out of, unless you make somebody a fall guy, a victim, but they [the Addams] consciously victimized nobody.”

Despite landing among the top 25 shows both of its years on the air, ABC cancelled *THE ADDAMS FAMILY* after its second season. “They dropped the show, but nothing they ever put into that Friday night slot ever reached the ratings of *THE ADDAMS FAMILY*,” noted Browar. Filmways Chief Martin Ransohoff complained personally to ABC president Leonard Goldenstein and offered to convert the show to color if ABC would keep it on.

“They thought it was a fad,” said Astin of ABC’s lack of interest. “But it really wasn’t. The show had a very solid basis. In reruns, it continued to be a strong show.”

According to Perrin, the cast and crew took the news of its cancellation in the spirit of Charles Addams. Quipped Perrin, “They made a suicide pact, but chickened out.” □

ADDAMS IN CARTOONLAND

Hanna-Barbera produced sixteen animated episodes of *THE ADDAMS FAMILY* as a half-hour cartoon show, broadcast on NBC in the 1973-74 season and reran again in 1974-75. Noted the NBC/Hanna-Barbera press kit, the show was designed to be a “series of animated comedy adventures tailored to the tastes of juvenile audiences everywhere.” Boy, was it ever.

The premise was simple. The Family packs up their belongings and hits the highways of America in their haunted trailer in search of laughs. Stops in the sixteen episode run of the series included New York City, Mardi Gras, the Moon, and the Kentucky Derby. In the pilot

show, the Family buys the “deed” to Central Park.

Hanna-Barbera designed the animated characters with the look of the Charles Addams cartoons. In addition to the cast of regulars, the cartoon show added Ocho, an octopus that functioned much like a family

Hanna-Barbera’s Fester and “Thing.”



dog. The writing, design and voice work for the series was done at the Hanna-Barbera studios in California, while the animation was produced in England by the now-defunct London firm of Halas and Batchelor.

Jackie Coogan and Ted Cassidy were the only original cast members to take this side trip and record voices for the show. Other family members were voiced by Hanna-Barbera regulars Janet Waldo (Morticia and Granmama), Lennie Weinrib (Gomez) and Cindy Henderson (Wednesday). Curiously enough, the voice of Pugsly was provided by a young Jodie Foster, her first step to super-stardom. **Robert T. Garcia**

The Addams Family

THE TV-MOVIE REUNION

More than a decade after the demise of the original series, the cast reassembled in 1977 for a full-color TV movie.

By Robert T. Garcia

Charles Addams' second wife, Barbara Colyton, acquired some of the rights to her husband's Addams Family cartoons, after their divorce in the mid-'60s. In 1977 she approached David Levy, creator and the executive producer of the original series, with the idea of exploiting the characters again on television. Levy pitched the idea to all three of the networks and was turned down. Levy eventually sold the concept of a revival to producer Charles Fries, who made the 90-minute HALLOWEEN WITH THE ADDAMS FAMILY as part of his contract with NBC to produce TV movie segments to augment their weekly movie programming.

"We thought we were buying everything when we bought it from Addams' ex-wife," said Fries, "but it turned out that certain elements had been created as part of the series that was made for Filmways which [David Levy] didn't really control. So we had to do a deal with Filmways also." The situation was not a happy one for Fries. "Especially when we didn't know about it until a week and a half before production," noted Fries.

The script for the TV movie revival was written by George Tibbles, a veteran of the black and white series, punched up by Levy, who reassembled nearly all the old cast members, except for Blossom Rock as Granmama, who had died in the interim. The story was a simple one, involving The Addams' preparations for Halloween, the most important family holiday, complicated by a visit from Gomez' brother, who has the hots for Morticia.

To direct, Levy hired Dennis Steinmetz, who had done a number of television comedies and the AIP feature RECORD CITY. Steinmetz completed the show on a tight, twelve-day shooting schedule, working around John Astin, who was available on the set for only seven days. At the time, Astin was also filming the series OPERATION PETTICOAT and Steinmetz had to shoot around him. "We would shoot Carolyn [Jones]'s closeups," Steinmetz



Carolyn Jones, Ted Cassidy and John Astin in HALLOWEEN WITH THE ADDAMS FAMILY, produced by Charles Fries.

remembered, "and then go back later, with the same setups to shoot John's closeups and the master shots of their scenes. We saved ourselves a setup in a lot of cases by shooting Carolyn's closeups at another time." Astin was so busy that his wife, Patty Duke-Astin, brought their children to the set so he would have time to see them.

Though production was rushed, Steinmetz remembered the shoot as one of the best film experiences he ever had. "They were all good people. I didn't have one cast problem of any kind on that whole shoot. Everybody was there when you needed them. There were no egos. Everybody was incredibly wired to the series, and what their characters were. It was a real pleasure to direct. Everybody knew where they had to be. It was just a matter of trying out new little comedy twists to see if you could get a new slant on a line."

The movie was shot on location in a house in the Hancock Park area of Los Angeles, previously used for the horror

movie BEN. Director of photography, Jacques Marquette, who had worked on BEN five years earlier, even found an old anchor for lighting equipment in one of the house's alcoves. "We ended up using the darn thing," said Steinmetz.

The house had a beautiful polished wood staircase that Steinmetz thought would make a terrific visual. He went to Carolyn Jones early in the shoot to discuss a scene centered around the staircase. "All of a sudden I got this stare," said Steinmetz, "Walk . . . down . . . the stairs?" she said. "You want me to walk down the stairs in this dress?" Actually, she was really game. She ended up doing it not once, but through a number of takes, because we had some technical problems. Every time I said we had to do it again, two guys at the bottom of the stairs would grab hold of her and carry her to the top. There was no chance in the world that she would be able to walk up to the top of the stairs! Getting down was enough."

Later in the production, there was a scene where Jones had to walk up the stairs. The family's Halloween celebration took place in a special room in the tower. The whole family had to ascend singing a Halloween song. "We couldn't shoot her [easily]," said Steinmetz, "We unzipped her dress all the way up to her rear end. It was the only way we could get her up the

continued on page 61

Jones, trimming her beloved man-eating plant.



SUBURBAN

How Hulk Hogan got the effects muscle to

By Larry Brooks

Can wrestling superstar Hulk Hogan fill Arnold Schwarzenegger's boots? Probably. But how can he match the multi-million dollar special effects that usually enhance a Schwarzenegger performance, on just a fraction of the budget? For **SUBURBAN COMMANDO**, Hogan's science fiction vehicle to movie stardom, New Line Cinema hired makeup expert Steve Johnson to provide some show-stopping creature effects, and Pacoima-based Perpetual Motion Pictures was asked to come up with a raft of state-of-the-art visual effects at cut rates. The impressive, low-budget effects work sets the stage for Hogan's role as intergalactic soldier of fortune Shep Ramsey, vacationing on Earth with suburbanites Christopher Lloyd and Shelley Duvall. New Line is scheduled to open the film October 11.

New Line's visual effects producer, Jeff Okun, brought on during pre-production in September 1990, made the decision to hire Perpetual Motion Pictures, and credits visual effects supervisor Richard Malzahn with giving the production more bang for its effects buck. "There wouldn't

have been any **SUBURBAN COMMANDO** if it wasn't for his team," said Okun. "We had 170 odd shots to do. They didn't have a great deal in the budget for the effects. It was insane."

Malzahn and PMP general manager Charles Finance suggested using existing models as an economy move. Finance introduced Okun to famed modelmaker Greg Jein, who let the production mix and match from his spaceship inventory, renting rather than buying the models Jein assembled. PMP came up with Hogan's ship as well as the Space Tick, the ship of the nemesis hot on his trail, General Suitor. Jein provided the others, which incorporated parts from a **STAR TREK Enterprise** and Klingon cruiser, as well as the nose cone from the spaceship in **PLANET OF THE APES**, including one ship built for **CAPTAIN EO** but never used.

Jein's low-rent spaceship armada was used by PMP for an elaborate outerspace battle, filmed with motion-control cameras, which opens the picture. Starfields were made by punching holes in black aluminum foil. "There are eight ships, a planet, explosions, probably thirtelements work-



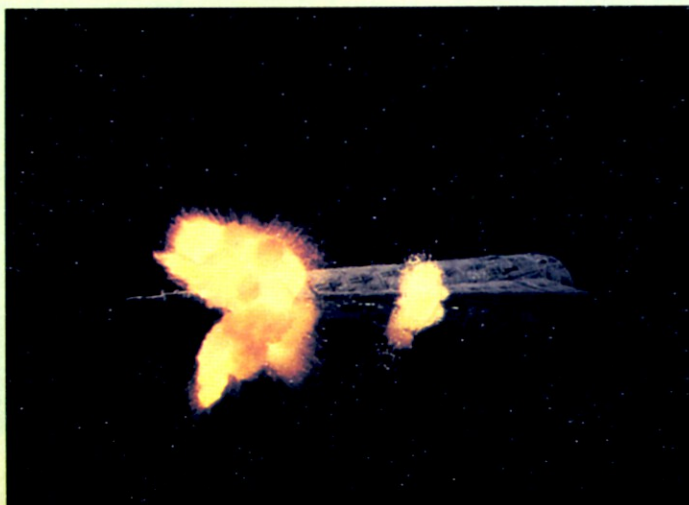
Hulk Hogan as intergalactic soldier of fortune Shep Ramsey, leaving Earth with sharpshooter JoAnn Dearing.

ing in that first shot," said Okun. "The producers wanted the feel of **STAR WARS**. The Bridge Mask, the ship that was supposed to be fourteen miles long, glides overhead. We dragged a camera across the bottom of the ship rebuilt from **PLANET OF THE APES**, just one inch off the surface, using a 9mm lens."

To keep costs down on the sequence, which took five



Above: Hogan got lasered for less by Pacoima-based Perpetual Motion Pictures. The rotoscoped animation is timed to live action pyrotechnics on the set. Right: Other effects by PMP (l to r) 1: The Bridge Mask under attack in the **STAR WARS**-style space battle which opens the film. 2: Hogan heads to Earth for some R&R, spaceship by Design Setters. 3: Hogan's ship, about to crash into an abandoned disco, actually a 1/6 scale miniature built by Design Setters. 4: Hogan departs in the Space Tick.



COMMANDO

match the likes of Arnold Schwarzenegger.

weeks to complete, PMP did generic, reusable motion-control passes on the attack ships, called Space Bees. Some of the shots were doubled by flopping the film and having the ship enter from the opposite side of the frame. The footage is also repeated in the live action on video monitors inside the Bridge Mask, to help suggest an ongoing battle.

A shot of Ramsey's ship, crashing on Earth—inside a disco—was done as an afterthought by the production. Okun had originally suggested the shot but it was decided in pre-production not to show it. "After they cut the film together, they realized they needed the footage," said Okun. "I got to say, 'I told you so.' Being smart guys, we pre-planned for it. When we shot the disco for the establishing shot, we kept this in mind, so we had the right angle. All we had to do was figure out how to get Ramsey's ship to match it."

Since the building, an actual location, was undisturbed, Ramsey's ship had to be made to crash through the roof. Okun and Malzahn came up with what they termed a "Jack Benny Jalopy routine," a motion-control move where the ship sputters overhead, then falls straight down. PMP used

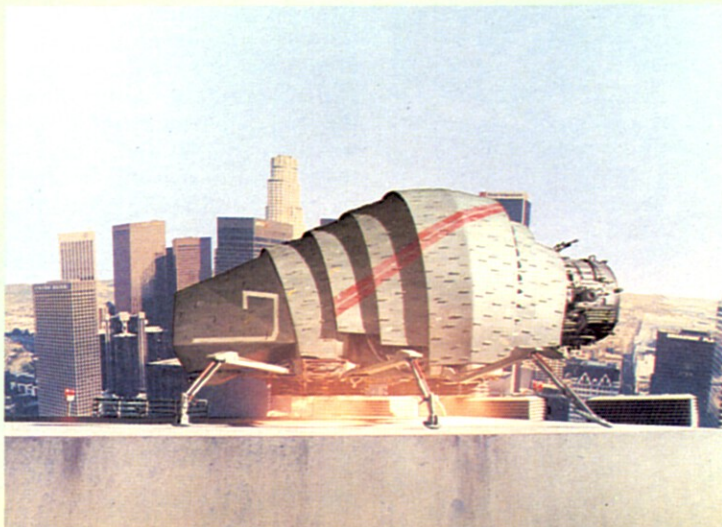
a one-sixth scale model of the building for the shot, combined with stock footage from their explosion library.

Pyrotechnic work for the film was handled by Joe Viskocil, who blew up the Death Star in STAR WARS and, more recently, worked on TERMINATOR 2. Space battle explosions, some red, some blue, some magnesium bright, were shot outdoors at night if it wasn't windy, or on a stage, hung from an 18-foot wire. "We pointed the camera into a mirror on the ground," said Okun. "This way you get the effect of zero gravity. If you shoot across, gravity pulls the flame and debris down. The reason we don't point the camera lens directly at the explosion is because all the debris would fall onto an \$18,000 camera lens. The by-products of an explosion, such as burning titanium, can be very corrosive, quite literally eating into the glass."

Explosions sometimes served as the punctuation for a scene, such as the shot of Ramsey's ship crashing to Earth. Noted Okun, "In reality, you'd see a ship disappear behind a building. It's very unfulfilling. So we threw in an explosion, and the explosion helped us mask some problems." □



Show-stopping, low-budget makeup effects by Steve Johnson's Sun Valley-based XFX, Inc., a creature suit that transforms Hogan's nemesis into an alien menace.





Mom & Dad

Devising special effects for

By Steve Biodrowski

Propelled by the success of Orion's *BILL AND TED'S BOGUS JOURNEY*, Warner Bros was scheduled to open *MOM AND DAD SAVE THE WORLD* September 27. By coincidence, the fantasy-comedies, both scripted by Ed Solomon and Chris Matheson, were filmed back-to-back at the Santa Clarita Production Center in Valencia, California, with the Warner Bros project shooting first, at the end of last year. Directed by

Tony Gardner's wise-cracking rat who lives beneath the throne of Spengo.



Greg Beeman (*LICENSE TO DRIVE*), the film stars Jeffrey Jones and Teri Garr as the parents who save Spengo, the strange little planet of the title, after being whisked there in their station wagon by its mad emperor, *SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE*'s Jon Lovitz. The gag about Spengo is that it's a planet of idiots, where nothing works right, a world eminently in need of salvation.

Originally slated to open earlier this year, the film's fall opening gave Beeman time to refine the effects work being done by Perpetual Motion Pictures. Though Solomon and Matheson's script literally stated that the effects need not be—or even look—expensive, Beeman maintained that suggestion was never seriously considered. "I think Ed and Chris were very clever when they put that in the script—that was a note to the studio executives" who might have feared the cost of optical work, according to Beeman. "We did not take that approach at all. There's not humor to be gotten out of making the movie look cheap; the humor is in the incongruity [of a car in space]. We didn't spend a lot of money on the effects, but everyone

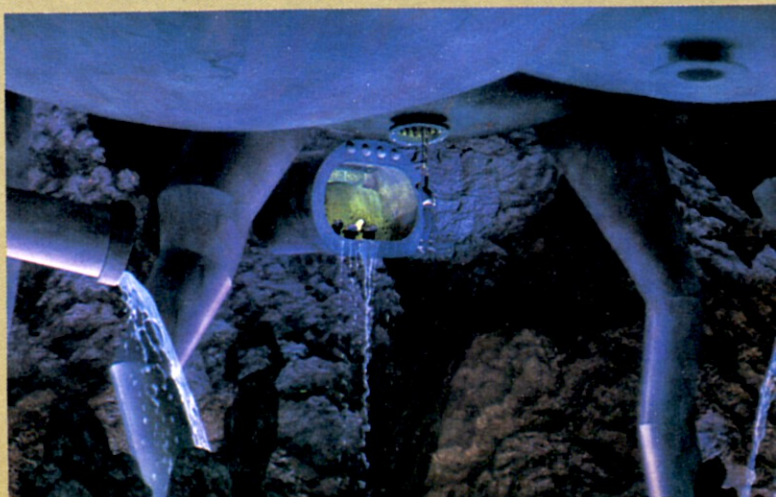
tried to do their best."

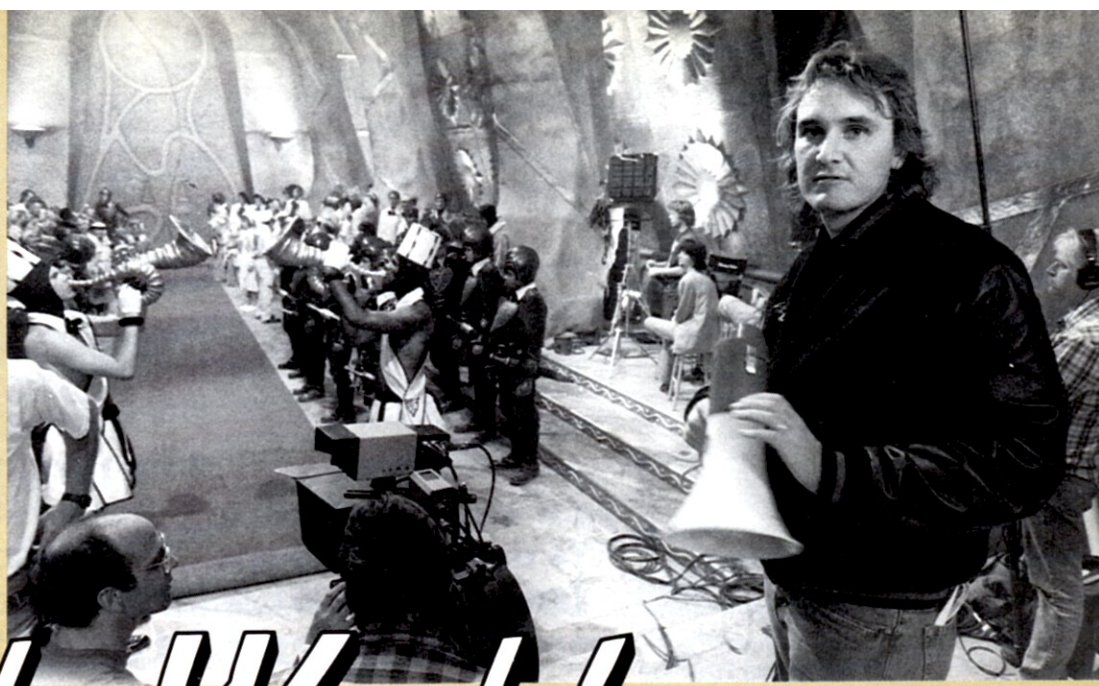
Unlike some directors who find effects work tedious, Beeman emerged from *MOM AND DAD SAVE THE WORLD* eager to leap into another high-tech film, an adaptation of the arcade game *SUPER MARIO BROTHERS* for Jaffe-Lansing productions. "I've got the bug for doing special effects movies now—I love the creature effects, and I love designing," said Beeman, who plans to use makeup expert Tony Gardner again for the new film's creature work. "It's a slow process, and in that sense I can see why it's frustrating to some directors. But the thing I've loved about movies

since I saw *STAR WARS* as a kid is that it suddenly became clear to me that movies nowadays can go anywhere and do anything. Special effects is a way to do that, and I love it. Maybe after two pictures, I'll get sick of it and want to do *MY DINNER WITH ANDRE, PART II*, but for now, I'm enjoying it."

In *MOM AND DAD SAVE THE WORLD*, the look of Spengo City created some aesthetic headaches because the buildings are supposed to have been designed by the planet's less-than-competent architects. Although Beeman and production designer Craig Stearns drew their inspiration from the

Dad hangs out in the Spengo sewer system, a matte by Perpetual Motion Pictures.





Save the World

Left: Mom & Dad arrive by station wagon at Spengo City, a planet run by idiots, effects by Perpetual Motion Pictures. Center: A Spengo denizen, makeup by Tony Gardner. Above: Director Greg Beeman.

another gagfest by the creators of **Bill & Ted.**

work of Dr. Seuss, Stearns wanted his color schemes to contain realistic patinas.

Noted Richard Malzahn, who co-supervised the effects with Robert Habros, "Initially, we were not involved in the design phase, but the city was sort of left up to us—we didn't know we were designing it till halfway through. It was a combination effort; we'd go to Craig and say, 'What do you want us to do about this?' What they had initially drawn in the color sketch was a purple and green city like Oz. What Craig was finding out in live action was that he couldn't make the purple look real, because there's no such thing as a purple patina—there's nothing that oxidizes or ages purple on Earth, so something like that just looks fake. He was altering his production design as they went through the picture. Since nobody had designed the city, except for a couple of sketches, we had free reign to do whatever worked, which is good and bad, because we had to make sure we matched everything they were doing in live action.

"The biggest problem was the actual structural design," Malzahn continued. "[The production envisioned] a struc-

ture that was twenty stories tall and bends over to the side—there's just no way that it can support itself. You're going to have the feeling that it's a miniature or there's something weird, because your brain has a sense of reality that you can't really turn off. It's funny, but it's not real."

Another special effect which displays Spengo's incompetent technology is one of which Beeman is particularly proud. "John Van Fleet, at Available Light, and I worked on making the laser effects consistent with the production design," said

Beeman. "The concept was that this is a planet of idiots and nothing works well. We decided the specs on the laser guns were irregular, so every time one is fired, you never know what trajectory it's going to take. I think that's a little more special. It's laser blasts we haven't seen before, not just standard STAR WARS stuff."

Beeman noted that the extra time spent working on the picture permitted a rigorous previewing process that benefitted the production. "We've had four previews so far," said Beeman in June. "I expect we'll

have two more. Usually, the first previews are a bit of a slap in the face. That was the case with our first preview, which was thirty minutes longer. The audience laughed a lot, but it was inconsistent. Basically, the process after that was tightening up. The thing that's amazing to me about audiences is how sophisticated they are and how much you can communicate in shorthand. In our first cut, we spent thirty minutes introducing the characters; now it's twelve minutes. I'm really happy with the movie: it's only 82 minutes, and it flies along.

"Now the studio comes in and tries to find the right audience," added Beeman. "Subsequent previews become testing for the advertising campaign. It may be a hard movie to get a handle on, but I really do feel it's a movie that, if anybody came into it, there would be a level of enjoyment. Kids seem to like it because it's a little magical—it has talking dogs and fish. Teenagers like it because of Jon Lovitz. I hope that an older crowd can appreciate the irony of this middle-American couple [Teri Garr and Jeffrey Jones] on another world." □

Dad (Jeffrey Jones), chased in the sewers by ferocious, man-eating mushrooms.



TERMINATOR

T2 scores KO—the story behind the year's

By Dann Gire

One of the biggest Hollywood stories in 1991 was the immense cost of *TERMINATOR 2: JUDGMENT DAY*. It became notorious for being the most expensive film ever made, with final cost estimated at \$110 million. Even Peter Hoffman, the president of Carolco, which bankrolled the project, admitted T2 was a gamble, a big one. So, what did you expect from Carolco, the company that brought us the previous "World's Costliest Movie," 1990's *TOTAL RECALL*? Hollywood honchos are still speculating about the money involved in T2, but now it's about the size of the pay-off.

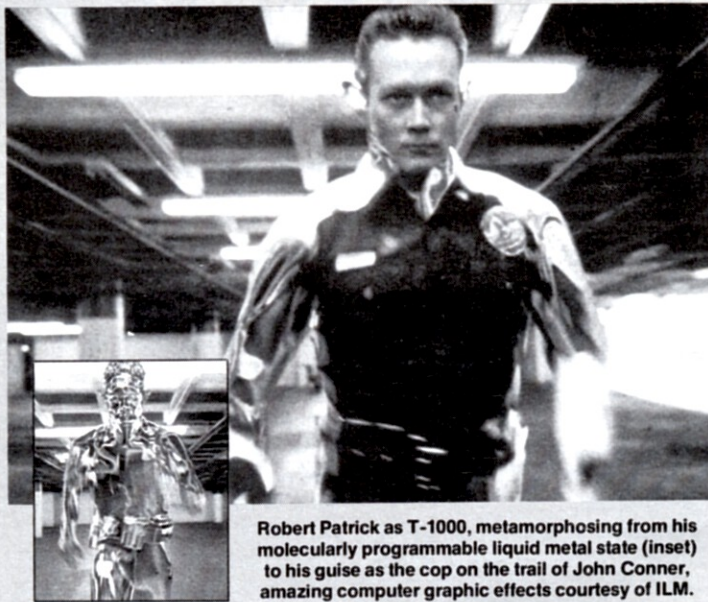
In its first seven weeks in release, according to *Variety*, *TERMINATOR 2* made \$171,493,499. Worldwide earnings are projected at well over \$400 million (about \$225 million outside the U.S.) Potential worldwide video revenues may be \$70 million, and TV showings could add an extra \$45 million. Ultimately, Carolco could clear over \$75 million. The megabuck production that had everybody talking has apparently come through a winner—and it still has people talking.

"Here's why it's an expensive movie," said Larry Kasanoff, the head of director James Cameron's Lightstorm Entertainment, which produced the film for Carolco. "First of all, we had the biggest star in the world [Arnold Schwarzenegger] who costs a considerable amount of money and is worth every penny of it [reportedly \$14 million, paid to him in the form of a Gulfstream jet, and a cut of the gross over \$260 million]. We couldn't have made the movie without him.

"Second, we had one of the best directors in the world [James Cameron], who conceived, wrote, directed, art-directed—he did everything on the project [cost, an estimated \$3 million].

"Third, we had to purchase the sequel rights to what has become one of the classic movies of all time [cost, reportedly

"Our offices are not located in your swank section of Beverly Hills. We don't want to spend money on fancy offices. We want to spend money on fancy special effects."



Robert Patrick as T-1000, metamorphosing from his molecularly programmable liquid metal state (inset) to his guise as the cop on the trail of John Conner, amazing computer graphic effects courtesy of ILM.

\$10 million]. Kasanoff also noted the ambitious scope of the movie, including expensive special effects Cameron wrote into the script that had never been attempted before.

Direct production costs have been estimated at \$75 million. Additional costs include interest (\$5 to 10 million), studio overhead (several millions) and distribution costs (\$20 million). Kasanoff claimed that the film stayed on budget, and was definitely a no-frills experience. When reporters called him about the budget, he'd invite them to the set. "We'd be huddled in 38° weather in a wet steel mill located in a small industrial town with smoke, steel dust and fire in the middle of the night, sitting on a carton. I'd say, 'This is our luxurious set.'"

Kasanoff and Cameron created Lightstorm Entertainment in 1990, and began tackling T2. "Usually, you start a production company and you spend the first year looking for scripts," Kasanoff said. "The

first thing we did was hire a production team and we set out to try to get the best people in the world. It was interesting making this movie because while we got things that cost so much money—the rights and the talent—Jim and I come from a background of low-budget movies. Jim did *THE TERMINATOR* for \$6 million. I did *BLUE STEEL* for \$8 million. So we tried to make a high-budget movie with a low-budget mentality. Our offices are in a bunker next to the Burbank Airport, not your swank section of Beverly Hills. They're filled with filmmakers making movies. That's what we're all about. We don't want to spend money on fancy offices. We want to spend money on fancy special effects."

Kasanoff and Cameron became business partners after a series of chance meetings, many through a mutual acquaintance, director Kathryn Bigelow. "I'd been running production for Vestron Pictures where I was head of acquisitions," Kasanoff said. "One of my last movies there

was *BLUE STEEL* [directed by Bigelow, who married Cameron on the rebound from his split with spouse Gale Anne Hurd, who happened to be the producer of the first *TERMINATOR*]. I'd also produced *A GNOME NAMED GNORM* [the Stan Winston-directed fantasy now on the shelf]. I'd run into Jim at all my rough cut screenings. He'd wanted to start a company and so did I. So we started Lightstorm Entertainment. We have a first-look deal with Carolco."

Kasanoff supervised the production of *TERMINATOR 2*, but his name doesn't appear on any credits, "for a lot of reasons," he said, "mostly because of the way deals were made and because this was a sequel." He noted that Carolco paid a hefty sum to both Hurd and Hemdale Films to secure sequel rights to *TERMINATOR*. Rumors abounded that the ex-Mrs. Cameron was given executive producer credits and a pay-off to stay away from the production. Kasanoff said that

2

boxoffice hit.

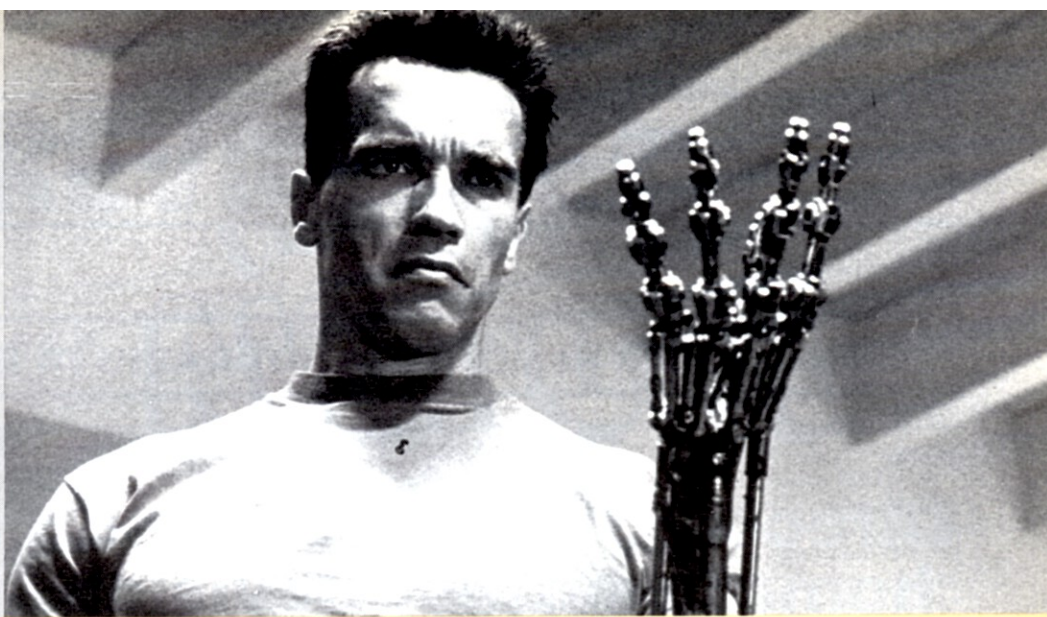
Hurd indeed functioned as an executive producer, but declined to get specific. "To find out anything like that, there's only one person to talk to and that's Jim," he said.

Cameron, however, is not talking. Gossip has it that he flipped for T2's other muscular star, Linda Hamilton, and left wife Bigelow. Cameron avoided interviews during the red-hot opening days of T2.

Kasanoff is especially pleased with T2's new killer cyborg, Robert Patrick, who starred in *FUTURE HUNTERS* (1985), Kasanoff's production for Vestron, a story involving time travel and the end of the world, regarded by some observers as a rip-off of *THE TERMINATOR*. "To tell you the truth," Kasanoff confessed, "it was more of a *RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK* rip-off." It was about a quest for the missing half of a Spear of Destiny that gave its owner power for good or evil. Recalled Kasanoff, "We made *FUTURE HUNTERS* for \$400,000, right after the coup in the Phillipines. Our director was appointed the head of the Phillipino Film Commission after the coup. So, we got the entire Phillipino army to be in the movie for free—we had tanks descending on downtown Manila!

"At Vestron, we suddenly realized that we were paying more for the rights to low-budget movies than people spent to make them. We just said, 'Hey, this is ridiculous. We'll go make our own low-budget movies.' We did and we made a lot of money at it. *FUTURE HUNTERS* was just one of the first ones." It was also Patrick's first movie. His work on it helped him to land the role of T-1000. □

T-1000 comes out of hiding, an ILM computer graphic. Cameron was rumored to have cut several other completed ILM object transformation shots.



Arnold Schwarzenegger as the Terminator, with a metallic endo-skeleton prop of his arm fabricated by Stan Winston's makeup group, as the cyborg strips the flesh from his arm to show he's not quite human.

T2'S LOST SCENES

Cameron's original version contained more special effects than meet the eye.

By Lawrence Brooks

No motion picture gets made without losing pieces of itself on the cutting room floor. And *TERMINATOR II* is no exception. Not only were major scenes deleted from the final edit, entire sequences never made it past the script stage, due to cost or artistic considerations.

The first cut (for budgetary reasons) was the Future-War sequence. Scripted but never filmed, it has an adult John Connor storming the Skynet Complex in Los Angeles with a contingent of commandos, and entering the Time Displacement Chamber, a vast machine-filled room. Kyle Reese, having appeared, steps among three hovering, massive, concentric rings, which spin around him like a huge gyroscope. The floor opens up and Reese lowers into the Time-Field Generator. Its energy guns come on and he disappears in a spectacular display of blinding light.

Connor learns that the Skynet computer had sent, not one, but two terminators back in time to kill him and his mother. He finds the gigantic crypto-storage freezer, containing scores of terminators lying in suspended animation, and makes preparations to send one of them back to 1991.

A major scene that was shot, but lost in the editing, had Reese, a role reprised from the original film by Michael Biehn, appear to Sarah Connor in a dream at the hospital, warning her that her son is targeted by Skynet. Sarah chases after him,

only to confront the Terminator, who shows her the nuclear destruction of Los Angeles. While she is blasted to bones, the Terminator is stripped of his flesh, becoming a smoking skeleton of steel.

In another scene Sarah cuts open the Terminator's scalp with an X-acto knife to reprogram his neural-net processor. She pulls the domino-sized micro chip out of his chromium skull and resets the pin switch, which will give him the capacity to learn.

Even the slippery T-1000 lost a scene. After killing a hospital guard, he hides the guard's gun by inserting it into his own chest. The 9mm pistol was supposed to "disappear as if it was dropped into a pot of hot fudge."

The film originally had a totally different ending. After the climax at the steel mill, the film dissolves to a daytime shot of a park in futuristic Washington, D.C. "July 11, 2029" flashes on the screen. Sarah's voiceover says, "August 29th, 1997 came and went. Nothing much happened. Michael Jackson turned forty. There was no Judgment Day. People went to work as they always do; laughed, complained, watched TV, made love." The camera reveals an elderly Sarah at the park's playground watching her son John, now in his forties, playing with his two children. Sarah continues, "John fights the war differently than it was foretold. Here, on the battlefield of the Senate, the weapons are common sense and hope." As Sarah watches them, the scene fades to a close. □

EERIE, INDIANA

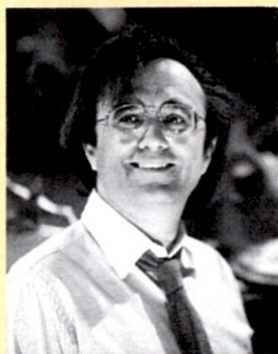
Director Joe Dante found a home in series television.

By Mark Dawidziak

Throughout the '80s, film director Joe Dante kept one foot in television by turning out episodes of such series as Steven Spielberg's *AMAZING STORIES*, *POLICE SQUAD* and the revival of *THE TWILIGHT ZONE*. Finally jumping into the medium with both feet, Dante has landed in a bizarre stretch of prime-time known as *EERIE, INDIANA*. In addition to serving as creative consultant for the 7:30 p.m. Sunday series that NBC premiered in September, Dante was to direct four of its first seven episodes.

A wacky mixture of humor and horror, sitcom and social satire, the show stars Omri Katz (J.R. Jr. on *DALLAS*) as 13-year-old Marshall Teller. The boy's completely average, middle-American family has moved from New Jersey to the seemingly completely average, middle-American town of Eerie, Indiana. Only Marshall realizes that, behind the picture of suburban perfection, Eerie is the vortex for all that is weird in the universe. With his 10-year-old sidekick, Simon Holmes (Justin Shenkarow), Marshall collects evidence of the supernatural and stores it in a basement cabinet.

The series is a tremendous kick for Dante, who grew up watching classic fantasy TV shows. "OUTER LIMITS, THRILLER, THE TWILIGHT ZONE—I saw them all, and I've worked on some of the new ones: *AMAZING STORIES* and the new *TWILIGHT ZONE*," said the director of such films as *PIRANHA* (1978), *THE HOWLING* (1981), *GREMLINS* (1984), *INNERSPACE* (1987), *THE 'BURBS* (1989), and *GREMLINS II: THE NEW BATCH* (1990). "What I like about this show is that it combines the virtues of an anthology show with the fact



Dante, at home in Eerie, Indiana

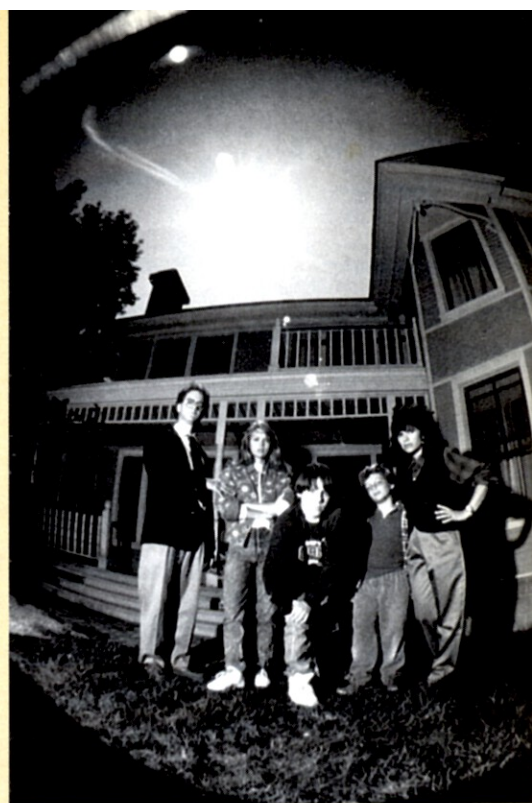
that it has continuing characters, in a way that I think is more integrated than, say the *FRIDAY THE 13TH* show, or *FREDDY'S NIGHTMARES*, or any other that had peripheral continuing characters. Our continuing characters are really the lead characters in the show, but as the stories progress, there are things that happen to other people that our characters get involved in.

"Oddly enough, that was the original concept for *TWILIGHT ZONE*—*THE MOVIE* [for which Dante directed the standout "It's a Good Life" segment]. Before the accident, the idea was that all the characters in the different stories would all appear in each other's stories. It was all going to be a kind of mosaic."

EERIE, INDIANA has been described by NBC as "Tom Sawyer lost in *THE TWILIGHT ZONE*." It could just as easily be called "*THE ADDAMS FAMILY* in reverse;" instead of a creepy family in a normal neighborhood, it's a normal family in a creepy neighborhood. "All of those shows came up in our discussions," said Dante. "Television is such a vampiric medium that it's almost impossible to do anything brand new. In this show, familiar elements are rejuxtaposed in ways that comment on themselves and make a different whole."

Another series that came up during discussion with co-creators Karl Schaefer and Jose Rivers was *KOLCHAK: THE NIGHT STALKER*, which starred Darren McGavin as a Chicago reporter who each week had a close encounter with the supernatural. "This is our pint-sized Darren McGavin," Dante said as he pointed to Katz. "He should live so long and have such a big career."

Look and listen for all sorts of in-jokes buzzing around *EERIE, INDIANA*. The



Kiddie Kolchak Omri Katz (center) with (l to r) sis Julie Condra, friend Justin Shenkarow, mom Mary Margaret Humes and dad Francis Guinan, on NBC.

boy's family may be oblivious to the weird things happening around them, but Marshall knows that Elvis is living on his paper route and that Eerie is a regular stopping place for UFOs.

"The movies that I've been doing tend to be very long and complicated," said Dante of his reasons for working in television. "There's just no gratification. It's always way ahead of you. With TV, because of the speed of the medium, you can actually do things that are going to air sometime within the same time frame that you actually thought of them. And I've never found anything that I thought was as well suited to my whatever-it-is that I have as this show. I've done a lot of pictures with kids and I've done a lot of pictures that are a little odd. And they're mostly comedic. And this show seems to combine all of that, plus it has sort of an underlying sweetness that I thought was really appealing.

"I wish I could say I've been waiting all my life to do *EERIE, INDIANA*, but that's not the case. But of the things that I've seen in the past ten years that have been offered to me on television, this is the first one that I really felt a personal connection to."

The scariest thing about *EERIE, INDIANA* is its time slot. The half-hour comedy-fantasy runs opposite *60 MINUTES*, a top-ten series for CBS. And the show's lead-in on NBC's Sunday lineup, *THE ADVENTURES OF MARK AND BRIAN*, has been blasted by critics as one of the sorriest rookies in the fall crop.

Dante, no newcomer to horror, has an answer: "We're not easily scared." □

REVIEWS

A serious work, mired in maladroit attempts at hip hilarity

THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM

A Full Moon Entertainment release. 4/91, 96 mins. In color. Director, Stuart Gordon. Producer, Albert Band. Executive producer, Charles Band. Director of photography, Adolpho Bartoli. Editor, Andy Horvitch. Sound, Giuseppe Muratori. Art director, Giovanni Natalucci. Special effects, Giovanni Corridori. Special effects makeup, Greg Connom. Costume designer, Michela Gisotti. Music, Richard Band. Screenplay by Dennis Paoli, adapted from the short story by Edgar Allan Poe.

Torquemada	Lance Henriksen
Maria	Rona De Ricci
Antonio	Jonathan Fuller
Francisco	Jeffrey Combs
Don Carlos	Tom Towles
Gomez	Stephen Lee
Cardinal	Oliver Reed

by Charles Leayman

Director Stuart Gordon melds the historic tale of the infamous Tomas de Torquemada, the 15th century Dominican monk who initiated the Spanish Inquisition and made it one of the blackest episodes in Church history, with the elements of Edgar Allan Poe's most famous short story. Torquemada was notorious for the implacable severity of his judgments and the outrageous cruelty of the punishments he meted out to men, women and children. Like "Witchfinder General" Matthew Hopkins, who wreaked another "spiritual" reign of terror two centuries later in England, Torquemada used alleged affronts to God as pretext for ridding the land of socially undesirable elements: "witches," the indigent, rebels of all sorts, and, specifically, "pagan Moors and heathen Jews." With quasi-"blasphemous" relish, Gordon exorcises Christianity's potential for sexual repressiveness and unleashed violence.

PIT AND PENDULUM opens in Spanish Toledo in 1492, the year in which Torquemada persuaded King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella to expel the country's Jews. The date, of course, evokes Columbus' discovery of America, linking the film to contemporary audiences and issues.

As in Michael Reeves' WITCH-FINDER GENERAL, an innocent couple (here a baker and his wife) runs afoul of repressive religion's mad agenda. Hauled before Torquemada's tribunal, Maria (sloe-eyed Rona De Ricci) is stripped naked and forced to endure her warders' lascivious



Lance Henriksen as 15th-century Dominican Tomas de Torquemada, a mesmerizing performance that conveys the soul of a beast trapped in a private hell of curdled sexuality.

search for "evil marks." The young woman falls under the gaze of the Grand Inquisitor's covertly inflamed eyes. Torquemada (who wears a girdle of nails and walks barefoot on broken crockery) perceives Maria as the embodiment of the Holy Virgin with whom he wishes to consummate the ultimate Oedipal transgression. (The film exudes more than a little of the oneiric eroticism and psycho/sexual frissons found in Matthew Lewis' Gothic classic, *The Monk*.)

Rumor has it that Peter O'Toole was first slated to portray the nefarious Torquemada, but Lance Henriksen could hardly be bettered in the role. Sporting a razored fringe of black hair around his cadaverous bald head, his hands held apart in an attitude of perpetual supplication as if to signal that he is only God's humble instrument, Henriksen might have stepped out of "The Triumph of Death," the Pieter Brueghel painting over which the credits and Richard Band's Orff-inspired score majestically play.

For all the character's inspired dementia, from having himself flogged while hallucinating Marias-Mary, to sleeping under a Damoclean sword that symbolizes his ever-vigilant anticipation of death's arrival, Henriksen manages somehow to convey the soul of the beast, to incarnate the pri-

ate hell of a curdled sexuality that can only cannibalize its host. "You put a spell on my manhood!" an impotent Torquemada rails at the Virgin-garbed Maria, but amid the terrifying shift from ardor to rage, Henriksen exposes the character's barren, pathetic, annihilating isolation.

In prison, Maria is befriended by an old woman awaiting execution. She reveals her "witchcraft" to consist of midwifery and healing with herbs, and represents the countless thousands of such women who historically fell prey to the Church's genocidal attack on those who would live outside its jurisdiction. She shares with Maria the power to escape the Inquisition's ubiquitous horrors in her mind, retreating to an Edenic vision that suggests the opening landscape of Ridley Scott's LEGEND. The old woman also delivers the script's most beautiful line: "You don't need a tongue to have a voice."

Unfortunately, if that line also suggests a camp reading, Dennis Paoli's screenplay is sometimes only too willing to comply. REANIMATOR's director has never hesitated to mix humor with the most outlandish horror, and doesn't here. A flunky torturer, panic-stricken at having been accused of cutting the tongue from one of Torquemada's favorite victims, lamely claims, "We don't do

tongues." Lines like this fall resoundingly flat in such an otherwise serious work.

Even Gordon regular Jeffrey Combs, as Torquemada's bespectacled henchman, with his patented brand of camp irony, succumbs to several of the script's maladroit attempts at hip hilarity. On the other hand, Oliver Reed's cameo as Papal emissary sent to quell Torquemada's sadistic zealotry occasions a blackly funny exchange between him and Henriksen that catches the precise note of jocularity escalating into horror. In literally sealing the Cardinal's fate behind a wall, Gordon wittily incorporates Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado" and gives chillingly fresh resonance to the tale's climactic, "Yes, for the love of God!"

The title's torture implements, appearing late in the film, form-fitting counterparts to those in Roger Corman's 1961 version (though Gordon's dungeon setting lacks the hellish sense of cavernous space that Corman brought to Vincent Price's Torquemada-like machinations). Antonio (Jonathan Fuller), whose attempts to rescue his wife recede to the background for much of the film, finds himself chosen as victim for the by-now completely mad Inquisitor's new toy.

Though THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM pays lip service to the illustrious Torquemada's being an individual aberration as far as the Church is concerned, the movie's overall effect makes its central character's psycho/sexual monstrosity seem inherent to Christianity's general repression of sexuality. It's a controversial point, and whether one agrees with it or not will surely color one's response to Gordon's film. But the movie's stance is unquestionably emphatic: as Antonio and Maria lead a procession of released prisoners from the agony-soaked interiors of Torquemada's citadel, Combs halts the pursuing guards by simply stating, "There will always be others." As chilling as the line is, it echoes an earlier, even more reverberant utterance: "That's what we do here; we hurt people." □

CAST A DEADLY SPELL Scaling Down the Production for HBO

By Mark Dawidziak

How do you take a script developed for a major Hollywood studio at a budget of \$25 million and turn it into a \$6.2 million movie for pay-cable service HBO? That was the challenge facing Gale Anne Hurd, a producer accustomed to working with budgets many times that size (*THE ABYSS*).

It certainly helps to have received your trial-by-fire film training from the master of lean budgets, Roger Corman. "Crisis management is what I learned from Roger Corman," said Hurd, who, shortly after graduating Phi Beta Kappa in economics and communications from Stanford University, was hired to assist Corman at New World Pictures. "With Corman, you had no pre-production. You had no money. Everyone who worked on the film had never worked on a film before.

"So you learn at the time that there's always a solution. I wouldn't say that we were very often making great art, but the kind of training that I received there was absolutely invaluable, and that's why it's very important to me to continue to make films at a reasonable budget level. Because I learned from Roger

Ward with David Warner as the millionaire who hires him to recover the Necronomicon, a bible of magic.

Corman that you can make a science fiction epic—which *BATTLE BEYOND THE STARS* was—for less than \$3 million. I realized from the very beginning that any screenplay can be made for any budget."

Hurd maintained that such budget considerations even applied to *THE ABYSS*, a film that was rumored to have gone wildly over budget. "Regardless of stories that may have been printed, *THE ABYSS* was done for a very reasonable amount of money," Hurd told television critics in Los Angeles. "It was done for less than \$45 million. My approach to filmmaking is always no-frills. I don't think that throwing money at the screen necessarily makes a better movie. There are, however, films that require extraordinarily large sums of money. *THE ABYSS* was such a film because of the technology that we were exploring. That included the computer-generated imagery of the pseudopod, brought to the screen by ILM and then perfected, I think, with *TERMINATOR 2*. All of that research and development became part of the budget."

Another way to do a \$25 million film for \$6.2 is to hire Martin Campbell to direct. Hurd met Campbell when she was working on *ALIENS* in England. At the time, the director was winning acclaim for his BBC miniseries *EDGE OF DARKNESS*, which blended murky supernatural elements with a chillingly realistic tale about supernatural dangers.

CAST A DEADLY SPELL, written by Emmy winner Joseph Dougherty (*THIRTYSOMETHING*), began life as a script titled "Lovecraft." When the script became available, it was grabbed by Robert Cooper, senior vice president for HBO Pictures, who offered it to Hurd to produce. "I had read the script a while ago," said Hurd. "It was a project that I was familiar with already and I said, 'This sounds like an ideal project to begin a collaboration.'"

Cooper and Hurd hammered out a strict budget that left no room for overruns. "The fact is that we are not allowed to go over budget," Hurd said. "To be quite honest, it's refreshing that there is simply not the possibility of exceeding the budget or the schedule. I think it makes us all much more responsible filmmak-



Fred Ward as L.A. gumshoe H.P. Lovecraft in an ambitious fantasy once budgeted for feature films at \$25 million, filmed for HBO for just \$6.2 million.

ers. That's very needed in this industry."

Still, the loss of about \$19 million from the budget did mean some concessions. "With effects, if something didn't work, we didn't have the opportunity to do it again unless we sacrificed something else," said Hurd. "But filmmaking, from its inception, has been the art of compromise, and, in this particular case, I never thought we compromised too much."

Several special effects involving incidental background magic were cut from the script, and an elaborate sequence with building materials flying through the air had to go. "I'm sure Fred would have loved to have had a few more takes in certain sequences, where we literally had to get it right without the luxury of coming back tomorrow and doing it again," said Hurd of the reduced HBO budget. "You know, you had to work 14-hour days at times."

Hurd believes that Hollywood isn't spooked by a \$25 million budget. It's the \$25 million budget that goes to \$40 million that terrifies studio bosses. "HBO felt that we would be able to pull it off and stick to the budget," she said, "and I think there was a bond of faith between the filmmakers and HBO to stick to that covenant."

Hurd is pleased with the cable experience: "I would love to see Lovecraft solve a lot more

cases... I'd love to see this character live on." HBO agrees. "It is the first time on HBO Pictures that we are developing a sequel," Cooper said. "So we do plan on doing more than one."

And Fred Ward, who plays L.A. detective H.P. Lovecraft, is amenable: "It seems to me that these old gumshoes are kind of an American icon," said Ward. "They are, in a sense, the only guys in town with morals. He has his own ethics, and is responsible to no one but himself, and he lives in this sort of a seedy atmosphere, but in ways is untarnished by it."

The magic in *CAST A DEADLY SPELL* is "really a metaphor for power and greed," said Hurd. "It's the easy way to accomplish something. It's for people who are looking for a quick buck and to make it to the top without really cracking a sweat."

But if everybody uses magic, conjuring up all sorts of powers, how can Lovecraft, an ordinary gumshoe, triumph? "Well, he just does," Ward said when faced with the question during a press conference. "The magic backfires at times. It's kind of a double-edged sword, I guess. If you become corrupt, sometimes it'll backfire in your face." Or, as Hurd put it, "live by the sword, die by the sword. In this particular instance, the people who resort to evil become victims of evil." □



Mixture of horror, humor and private eyes misses its mark

CAST A DEADLY SPELL

An HBO Pictures release of a Pacific Western Production, 8/91, 120 mins. In color. Director, Martin Campbell. Producer, Gale Anne Hurd. Director of photography, Alexander Gruszynski. Visual effects, 4-Ward Productions. Creature effects, Tony Gardner and Alterian Studios. Music, Curt Sobel. Screenplay by Joseph Dougherty.

H. Phillip Lovecraft Fred Ward
 Amos Hackshaw David Warner
 Connie Stone Julianne Moore
 Harry Bordon Clancy Brown
 Olivia Hackshaw Alexandra Powers
 Hypolite Kropotkin Arnetta Walker
 Detective Grimaldi Peter Allas
 Lieutenant Bradbury Charles Hallahan
 Tugwell Raymond O'Connor

by Mark Dawidziak

If Warner Bros had hired Tod Browning to direct a Raymond Chandler mystery starring Humphrey Bogart, the stylish hybrid film might have resembled Home Box Office's CAST A DEADLY SPELL. It has mystery. It has magic. It has mirth. It has monsters.

And it has problems—just enough ragged edges to the script to make you realize why a major studio might have passed on the project. Nevertheless, director Martin Campbell (the miniseries EDGE OF DARKNESS and REILLY: ACE OF SPIES) handles the mixture of horror, humor and Chandleresque detective fiction with wit, style and a brisk pace. The magic doesn't always work, however, and, due to key structural problems in Joseph Dougherty's clever script and cutbacks caused by a minimal budget, CAST A DEADLY SPELL is as erratic as it is eccentric.

Some of the effects, particularly the creatures, are spectacular. Others are threadbare. Some of the dialogue is hilariously reminiscent of the crisp writing of Chandler and Dashiell Hammett. Other lines are embarrassingly cheap imitations. Some of the twists are nifty surprises. Others are painfully obvious. While the good far outweighs the bad, the film's hit-and-miss nature ultimately takes the production far enough off target to keep it out of the hit category.

Fred Ward (Gus Grissom in THE RIGHT STUFF) stars as private detective H. Phillip Lovecraft, a Bogie-style investigator keeping a struggling business alive in 1948. He's honest, all right. Too honest. In this Los Angeles, everybody uses magic—everybody but Lovecraft, who is hired by wealthy Amos Hackshaw (David Warner) to recover a



Ward's wisecracking private eye inhabits an L.A. rife with magic, monsters and mirth.

mysterious book, the Necronomicon.

Ward is a splendid choice to play the world-weary detective whose cynical exterior covers up a rigid moral code and the heart of a romantic. He has a wisecrack for every occasion. He swallows each hard knock with a shot of whiskey.

CAST A DEADLY SPELL is not the first cable movie to blend a traditional detective story with the supernatural. That honor belongs to Showtime's GOTHAM (1988), which starred Tommy

Lee Jones and Virginia Madsen. Yet HBO's film is by far the more ambitious attempt to mix the two genres. Mystery fans will notice many of the trappings of film noir classics: police suspicious of the detective hero, a seedy sleuth invited into a world of incredible affluence, a corrupt businessman (played by Warner, a veteran of such time-twisting films as TIME AFTER TIME, and TIME BANDITS). Fantasy fans will have fun with the many inside jokes: a police lieutenant named Bradbury, a nightclub called the Dun-

wich Room, and lines certain to ring more bells than a Notre Dame hunchback.

Filmed in Los Angeles, CAST A DEADLY SPELL tries very hard to establish and sustain a smart-alecky approach to the material. In one scene, Lt. Bradbury is seen grilling a suspect. When the hapless howler is hauled away, we see that it was a werewolf. "I hate full moons," Bradbury sighs.

Scripter Dougherty eventually writes himself into a corner that makes his hero less compelling than Hammett's Sam Spade or Chandler's Philip Marlowe. In the end, when the evil summoned up by his adversaries eventually backfires, the detective is reduced from moral participant to glorified observer. And that's where CAST A DEADLY SPELL departs from the traditions of Hammett and Chandler.

It's an interesting idea to have Lovecraft maintain his ethical standards by refusing to use magic, a corrupting force. Internally, Lovecraft has the power to fight it, but externally he is not given the means to combat its physical strength, and, without that, CAST A DEADLY SPELL stops at intriguing while trying to reach compelling. □

Boxoffice Survey: Genre Plummets After Two-Year High

An analysis of the Top Grossing films, as reported in Variety's "Weekend Boxoffice Report" reveals that in the first half of 1991, revenue from horror, fantasy and science fiction accounted for 29% of all money earned at the boxoffice (42.8% last year), down 13.8% from last year, ending the genre's impressive two-year high.

Revenue from horror films is up a whopping 58% over last year's weekend boxoffice sampling. This year's still-strong boxoffice hit SILENCE OF THE LAMBS, in addition to SLEEPING WITH THE ENEMY are responsible for horror's respectable showing. Fantasy revenues, going into two-year slump are down 16.4% from last year. Science fiction took a beating at the boxoffice, represented by only 6 titles (16 last year) with revenues dismally lower than

TOP GENRE FILMS OF '91

TERMINATOR 2 (Tri, sf, 9) ...	\$184,146,088
ROBIN HOOD: PRINCE OF THIEVES (Wb, f, 12)	\$151,014,047
SILENCE OF THE LAMBS (Ori, h, 29)	\$130,184,279
SLEEPING WITH THE ENEMY (Fox, h, 24)	\$100,381,912
THE NAKED GUN 2½: THE SMELL OF FEAR (Par, f, 10) ..	\$ 83,413,748
TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES II (Ni, sf, 19)	\$ 78,582,619
101 DALMATIANS (Bv, f, 8) ..	\$ 55,781,341
• MISERY (Col, h, 24)	\$ 50,825,592
THE ROCKETEER (Bv, sf, 12) ..	\$ 44,905,282
BILL & TED'S BOGUS JOURNEY (Ori, f, 7) ..	\$ 35,200,490
• EDWARD SCISSORHANDS (Fox, f, 13) ..	\$ 26,723,705
PROBLEM CHILD 2 (U, f, 9) ..	\$ 23,789,032
THE NEVERENDING STORY II (Wb, f, 15)	\$ 17,292,945
HUDSON HAWK (Tri, sf, 11) ..	\$ 17,218,916
SWITCH (Wb, f, 7)	\$ 14,821,477
• LOOK WHO'S TALKING TOO (Tri, f, 20)	\$ 18,624,396
DROP DEAD FRED (Ni, f, 13) ..	\$ 13,846,382
• GHOST (Par, f, 16)	\$ 11,319,083
WARLOCK (Tmrk, h, 19)	\$ 9,027,552
NOTHING BUT TROUBLE (Wb, f, 10)	\$ 8,443,020
BODY PARTS (Par, h, 5)	\$ 8,398,855
CHILD'S PLAY 3 (U, h, 1)	\$ 6,669,790

last year. Expect figures to go up sharply in our next survey with third quarter's entry of TERMINATOR 2.

In the first half of 1991, science fiction accounted for 3.3% of all films, 5.9% of all receipts; fantasy films accounted for 11.0% of all films and 10.7% of all receipts; while horror accounted for 5.5% of all films and 12.3% of all receipts. The total U.S. and Canadian boxoffice take of top-grossing genre films in the Variety totals are listed at right (through 9/9). For purposes of breakdown by genre, titles are indicated as horror (h), fantasy (f), and science fiction (sf), followed by number of weeks each title made the "Weekend Boxoffice Report" since January. Films first released in 1990 are indicated by an •, but figures do not include prior year's earnings.

FILM RATINGS

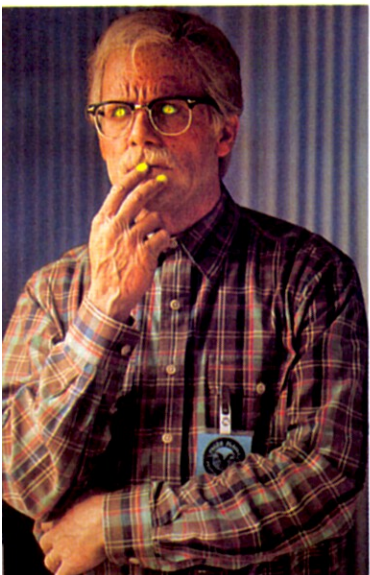
CLOSET LAND

Directed by Radha Bharadwaj. Universal. 2/91, 89 mins. With: Madeleine Stowe, Alan Rickman.

A difficult but rewarding film, dismissed by the press (with the notable exception of Kathleen Murphy in *Film Comment*) as a simple-minded polemic against an obvious target: torture of political prisoners. Actually, it's a subtle and moving psychodrama which makes its ideas emotionally accessible to an audience by drawing a parallel between political repression and sexual repression.

Imagine the inquisition scenes from 1984 expanded to feature length. All the action takes place in a Kafkaesque interrogation chamber at an unnamed time and place. Madeleine Stowe and Alan Rickman play the only two characters, also unnamed: an author who writes children's books and an interrogator who accuses her of inserting subversive themes into her work. The author's latest book, "Closet Land," is the story of a little girl, locked in a closet, who imagines a fantastic menagerie of talking animals that take her to freedom, inspired by the long-repressed incident of her molestation as a child by her mother's boyfriend in which she found escape only in her imagination. Faced by the horror of her current situation, the author once again takes the only escape route possible: into her mind, where the "Closet

Keith Szarabjka in **STEPHEN KING'S THE GOLDEN YEARS**, makeup by Carl Fullerton.



Robert Z'Dar in **MANIAC COP 2**, monster makeup by Dean Gates.

Land" characters come to life (via animation).

Writer/director Radha Bharadwaj makes the childhood incident a metaphor for political repression, and in a twist which would only be acceptable in such an abstract film, the interrogator is revealed to also have been the child molestor. It's intense, effective filmmaking, boasting superb performances.

●●● Steve Biodrowski

CURSE III: BLOOD SACRIFICE

Directed by Sean Barton. RCA/Columbia Home Video. 7/91, 90 mins. With: Christopher Lee, Jenilee Harrison, Henry Cate, Andre Jacobs.

Like the **HOWLING** series, this is another would-be video franchise with entries linked only by a title and a Roman numeral. III is set in East Africa in 1950. When an American woman (Jennifer Steyn) interrupts a native ceremony, preventing the sacrifice of a goat, the witch doctor (Dumi Shongwe) conjures up a sea demon who kills a good portion of the cast. Christopher Lee, almost unrecognizable in a white beard, plays a local doctor who believes in the native magic.

Belying its 90-minute running time, the film seems endless. The monster, a nice enough reptilian suit by Chris Walas, is not seen until literally the last minute, and is quickly dispatched. Up till then, the conjured, unseen elemental spirit uses a machete to kill people—no doubt the director had to shout *something* during filming until the suit became available. ○ Judith Harris

THE DARK BACKWARD

Directed by Adam Rifkin. Greycat Films. 5/91, 97 mins. With: Judd Nelson, Bill Paxton, Wayne Newton, James Caan, Rob Lowe.

Ladies and Gentlemen: it's a swirling, sucking eddy of despair—high-comedy division! Set in a universe composed entirely of rubbish-strewn back alleys and vermin-infested interiors, this is a shaggy (rabid) dog story about what happens when the world's worst comedian (Judd Nelson) suddenly finds a third arm sprouting from the center of his back. At once both antic and repellant—picture an Emmet Kelly with dysentery—the film is, if nothing else, a singular, moviegoing experience. The strange thing is: you *do* watch, even (or is that especially?) when, during the poor, benighted fool's rise to the top of the show-biz molehill, writer/director Adam Rifkin confuses wallows in the cesspit with insights into the human condition. His priorities are skewed, but also rather endearing—you get the feeling that, if he had worked for Disney, Rifkin would have wanted Old Yeller to live. So... is this the cult film of the year? Take another look at that cast list and you tell me.

●● Dan Persons

ENDLESS DESCENT

Directed by J.P. Simon. Live Home Video. 7/91, 79 mins. With: Jack Scalia, Ray Wise, R. Lee Ermy.

Belated entry in the "underwater film" wave of a few years ago (**THE ABYSS**, etc.). Jack Scalia is pressed into duty to investigate the disappearance of a submarine he designed. The rescue sub finds an underwater cavern full of Carlo de Marchis puppet-monsters, most sporting sharp fangs and evil dispositions. They're the result of government-sponsored biological weapons experiments. Most of the sub's crew gets chewed up or dissolves into green slime, but Scalia and

his ex-wife (coincidentally along on the dive) manage to elude the monsters and the government's clean-up man (Ray Wise) and escape. Nothing new, but short enough and lively enough to be mildly entertaining. Look for veterans Frank Brana and Edmund Purdom in small roles.

●● David Wilt

HUDSON HAWK

Directed by Michael Lehmann. Tri-Star Pictures. 5/91, 95 mins. With: Bruce Willis, Danny Aiello, Andie McDowell, Richard E. Grant, Sandra Bernhard.

Forget the bad things you've heard. Bruce Willis somehow manages to inspire resentment—some have yet to forgive him for his \$5 million **DIE HARD** salary—and his film seems to have been the unfortunate recipient of a backlash. Despite a reputation as an ego project for its star, Willis makes no attempt to hog the limelight, turning many of the best moments over to his co-stars, often making himself the butt of jokes. Willis plays Hawk, a cat burglar blackmailed into stealing three art works, unaware that each contains an integral component of a machine designed by Leonardo da Vinci, which turns lead into gold. The plot is intentionally convoluted, with Hawk caught between three secret organizations (including the CIA and the Vatican!) double-crossing him and each other. The quick pacing leaves little time to question credibility gaps, which become part of the parody.

Director Michael Lehmann adds an over-the-top spin to the stunts and action set pieces, turning them into outrageous sight gags on the level of Blake Edwards' expertly staged martial arts battles in the **PINK PANTHER** films. The cast is

uniformly excellent, and the jokes are mostly funny, though the idea of Hawk synchronizing his burglary efforts with popular songs falls flat. There hasn't been anything this outrageously inventive since Robert Fuest helped Vincent Price send himself up in the **DR. PHIBES** films.

●●● Steve Biodrowski

MANIAC COP 2

Directed by William Lustig. Live Home Video. 6/91, 87 mins. With: Robert Davi, Claudia Christian, Michael Lerner, Bruce Campbell.

Superior to the original, with a tighter plot and more interesting stuntwork, particularly an extended man-on-fire finale. Also benefits from actual Manhattan locations and an energetic performance by Leo Rossi as a talkative serial killer who befriends the title character (Robert Z'Dar). Dean Gates has markedly improved the special effects makeup, making it more skull-like. It's a mystery why it is shown so sparingly. Almost as much of a mystery as why this went directly to video when it's obviously worthy of a theatrical release. ● Judith Harris

MIRROR, MIRROR

Directed by Marina Sargenti. Academy Entertainment. 5/91, 103 mins. With: Karen Black, Rainbow Harvest, Kristin Dattilo, Yvonne De Carlo.

After a brief prologue set-up in 1939, Rainbow Harvest and mom (Karen Black) move into their present-day home, in which a mirror houses a demon. Harvest, who has apparently seen **BEETLEJUICE** too many times, constantly wears black, with heavy black eye makeup, and sports an ugly hairdo. She immediately comes under the influence of the unseen demon. People who cross her start to

THE DARK BACKWARD, makeup by Monrovia's Alterian Studios.



FILM RATINGS

wind up dead in unimaginative movie ways. When friend Kristin Dattilo tries to help, the demon whisks them back to the 1939 opening. The demon makes an ultra brief, anti-climactic appearance just before the end credits and looks like THE MANITOU (makeup by Chris Biggs).

• Judith Harris

MOON 44

Directed by Roland Emmerich. Live Home Video. 5/91, 102 mins. With: Michael Pare, Malcolm McDowell, Lisa Eichhorn.

In the year 2038, rival Earth corporations are warring over outerspace mining claims. Investigator Michael Pare is sent to the outpost on Moon 44 to uncover the corporate spy who's been selling out his company (with Malcolm McDowell in the cast, can there be any doubt?) Sound OUTLAND-ish? It is, although while the Sean Connery vehicle was basically a space western, this is more like a space-prison film or a space-army film, as Pare befriends the nerdy crew members, pitted against the tough ex-con pilots. Nice production design and special effects in this German-made film, but it's too long and there seems to be two plots fighting for screen time, so that neither gets much attention. Mildly entertaining.

•• David Wilt

STEPHEN KING'S THE GOLDEN YEARS

Directed by Kenneth Fink. Laurel Television/CBS. 7/91, 7-part miniseries, premiere-120 mins. With: Keith Szarabajka, Frances Sternhagen, Felicity Huffman, Bill Raymond.

Stephen King puts the old James Gunn series *The Immortal* through his word processor and comes up with an overly long variation in which janitor Harlan Williams (Keith Szarabajka) is exposed to regenerative material that causes him to grow younger following an explosion at a research laboratory. King resurrects the shop from *Firestarter*, a covert government organization specializing in assassination, which wants to find out why, even if it means killing Williams. Filled with eccentric stereotypes and dully paced by director Kenneth Fink, this "run for your health" miniseries suffers from tired blood.

• Dennis Fischer

SYNGENOR

Directed by George Elanjan Jr. Southgate Entertainment. 8/91, 86 mins. With: Starr Andreef, Mitchell Laurance, David Gale, Charles Lucia.

Back in 1980, the Synthesized Genetic Organism (Syn-genor) devised by William Malone for his directorial debut on SCARED TO DEATH, was compared to

FILM TITLE	●●●●		●●●		●●		●		○			
	MUST SEE	EXCELLENT	GOOD	MEDIOCRE	POOR	SB	DG	JPH	AJ	BK	GK	DS
BILL & TED'S BOGUS JOURNEY / Peter Hewitt, Orion, 7/91, 98 mins.			●●	●●		●●●	●	●	●●●			
BODY PARTS / Eric Red, Paramount, 8/91.			●	○	○		●	●				
THE BRITISH ANIMATION INVASION / Expanded Ent., 3/91.		●●●			●●		●	●●				●●
DEFENDING YOUR LIFE / Albert Brooks, Warner Bros, 3/91, 112 mins.		●●	●●●	●●	●●	●●●	●●	●●				●●
DINOSAURS / Michael Jacobs, ABC-TV series, 4/91, 30 mins.					●			●				○
DROP DEAD FRED / Ate De Jong, New Line, 5/91, 98 mins.				○	○	○	○	○				●●
HUDSON HAWK / Michael Lehmann, TriStar, 5/91, 95 mins.		●●●	○			●●●	○	●				●
MIRROR MIRROR / Marina Sargenti, Academy, 5/91, 105 mins.			●	○								
MOON 44 / Roland Emmerich, Live Home Ent., 5/91, 99 mins.			●		○	○						●
NAKED GUN 2½ / David Zucker, Paramount, 6/91, 85 mins.		●●●	●	●●	●	●	●	●●				●
NEVERENDING STORY II / George Miller, Warner Bros, 2/91, 89 mins.				○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
NOTHING BUT TROUBLE / Dan Aykroyd, Warner Bros, 2/91, 93 mins.			●	○	○		●●	●●				●
OMEN IV: THE AWAKENING / Mace Neufeld, Fox-TV, 5/91, 120 mins.					○	○						
101 DALMATIANS / Walt Disney, Disney animation, reissue, 79 mins.		●●	●●●	●●		●●●	●●●	●●●				●●
THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM / Stuart Gordon, Full Moon Ent., 5/91, 97 mins.		●●●			●	●●						●●●
POPCORN / Alan Ornsby, Movie Partners, 2/91, 91 mins.		●	○	○	○		●	●				●●
ROBIN HOOD: PRINCE OF THIEVES / Kevin Reynolds, Warner Bros, 6/91, 138 mins.		●●●	●			●●	○	○				●●●
THE ROCKETEER / Joe Johnston, Buena Vista, 6/91, 108 mins.		●	●	●●	●●●	●	●●●	●●●				●●●●
SILENCE OF THE LAMBS / Jonathan Demme, Orion, 2/91, 118 mins.		●●●	●●●●	●●	●●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●				●●●●
STAR TREK: NEXT GENERATION / Gene Roddenberry, TV series, 60 mins.		●●●	●●	●●●			●●	●●●				●●
STEPHEN KING'S GOLDEN YEARS / Kenneth Fink, Laurel/CBS-TV, 120 mins.					●			●●				●
SWITCH / Blake Edwards, Warners, 4/91, 103 mins.		●					●●	●				●
TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES II / Michael Pressman, New Line, 3/91, 88 mins.				●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
TERMINATOR 2: JUDGMENT DAY / James Cameron, 6/91, 136 mins.		●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●	●●	●●●				●●
TWO EVIL EYES / George Romero & Dario Argento, Taurus, 4/91, 105 mins.						●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●
WARLOCK / Steve Miner, Triumph, 2/91, 102 mins.			●●		●●	●●	●●	●●				●

SB/Steve Biodrowski DG/Dann Gire JPH/Judith P. Harris AJ/Alan Jones BK/Bill Kelley GK/Gary Kimber DS/Dan Schweiger

H.R. Giger's work on ALIEN, although that was flattering it quite a bit. And just as the sequel to ALIEN dealt with multiple ALIENS, so this sequel to SCARED TO DEATH also deals with multiple monsters, but once again such a comparison is too flattering.

Syngenor can reproduce asexually every 24 hours by producing a pod, and kill their prey by draining the spinal fluid of the victims. Nothing much is ever done with the concept in the sequel, directed by George Elanjan Jr. Malone gets a design credit for the creatures, which were constructed by Doug Beswick's company.

About the only reason to

rent this video is for the loony performance of David Gale as the CEO of the company producing the organisms as biological killing machines. Gale repeatedly injects his neck with glowing green goop which looks suspiciously like the mysterious serum from THE REANIMATOR, and proceeds to chew up the scenery in a campy, enjoyable performance.

• Judith Harris

TIMEBOMB

Directed by Avi Nesher. MGM/UA. 9/91, 98 mins. With: Michael Biehn, Patsy Kensit, Richard Jordan, Tracy Scoggins.

Formerly titled THE NAMELESS, this hyper revision of THE MANCHURIAN CAN-

DIDATE is an explosive wake-up call for a generation desensitized to blood and politics, giving them a body count film with a conscience. Now Michael Biehn's the unstoppable killing machine as Eddie Kaye, a gentle watchmaker whose tormented visions hide his past as a CIA terminator. Relying on lethal instincts as other brainwashed operatives try to murder him, Eddie and his reluctant doctor (Patsy Kensit) turn Los Angeles into a war zone as they try to stop a leftist's assassination.

Director Avi Nesher's training with Israeli Special Forces serves him well in staging visceral fights and shrieking

nightmares that could only come from military horrors. By assaulting viewers with a delirious parade of sex and violence, Nesher pushes this to the action edge like no other filmmaker since James Cameron, exposing the audience's primal lust as they root for Eddie to open fire, bash his opponent's head in, or make animalistic love to his virtual captive. In the picture's most impressive bit of genre-mashing, Eddie is gruesomely plugged into a biomechanical cocoon, the government's holographs of nude women and razor-sharp drills clawing into his mind. When war's savagery has become just another video game, this is a welcome, paranoid fable that takes no prisoners.

•••• Daniel Schweiger

THE UNBORN

Directed by Rodman Flender. Califim, 5/91, 82 mins. With: Brooke Adams, Jeff Hayenga, James Karen, K. Callan.

Another entry in the IT'S ALIVE sub-genre, playing on the fears and paranoia of expectant mothers. James Karen is a mad scientist using genetic engineering to implant mutant babies into women who come to his fertility clinic as a last resort. Brooke Adams is a patient with a history of mental problems, so no one listens to her when she starts to voice her suspicions. Adams continually seesaws back and forth, rejecting then accepting her monster baby (an okay effect by Joe Podnar), action that strains credulity and audience identification.

• Judith Harris

WITCHCRAFT III: THE KISS OF DEATH

Directed by R.L. Tillman. Academy Entertainment. 7/91, 85 mins. With: Charles Solomon, Lisa Toothman, Dominic Luciano.

At last! A low-budget horror film that concentrates on plot and character development, rather than special effects and gore makeup! Unfortunately, when the time does come for some fireworks, they aren't delivered and the climax seems flat. Charles Solomon, son of a warlock, sublimates his powers because of the unhappiness witchcraft has brought him. But when a suave psychic vampire (Dominic Luciano) sets his sights on Solomon's girlfriend (Lisa Toothman), it's time to break out the second sight and magic powers. The first two-thirds of the film plays more like STRANGERS ON A TRAIN than a horror movie, but is all the better for it. Good performances and production values deserve a better climax and effects, but the overall intent is to be cheered.

•• David Wilt

TREK ANNIVERSARY

continued from page 10

formance by a lustful alien, Jean Luc's recuperation back on the farm in France, a smitten Dr. Crusher's cross-species romance with a parasite changeling.

From Vulcan to Cyborg: As literal-minded fish out of water, the half-breed Spock and the android Data are only superficially the same character. A creature of the flesh, Vulcan and human, Spock at least gave lip service to the superiority of the rational and the need to suppress his "human side." By contrast, Data, a creature of technology, is forthright and vulnerable in his desire for human sensibilities. In the two decades since the original, the national faith in technocratic reason has plummeted and the distance between human and artificial intelligence has closed. The mechanical man of vintage science fiction has been supplanted by the computer age cyborg—terminators, "skinjobs," and androids—whose composition challenges the boundaries between flesh and fantasy. Data, as one episode put it, is not a toaster.

United Nations to Alien Nations: The ethnic makeup of Classic Trek was one Vulcan removed from the old WWII combat crew. New Trek embraces cultural diversity with the fervor of a campus human rights group. A rainbow coalition of human types mix casually with really weird-looking aliens, most of whom are vaguely humanoid with odd forehead protrusions. Conjugal relations abound. Yet, interestingly, the open tolerance for interspecies sex has not yet extended to an open avowal of same-species homosexuality: when Dr. Crusher's changeling lover becomes a female, Beverly bolts

back to the sick bay.

Space Babes to Total Women: Gone are the mini-skirted, mascaraed "yeomen" prancing around for the delectation of Kirk and wide-eyed adolescents. Like the modern workforce, the coed crew of New Trek copes and beams down together. Though no longer relegated to scenery and secretarial roles, the New Generation women remain nurturers: the empathetic Counsellor Troi, caretaker Dr. Crusher (whose enforced second-season sabbatical was an early misstep), and shoulder-to-lean-on, intergalactic bartender-cum-therapist Whoopi Goldberg. Like the anti-war agenda, the progressive feminist updating frequently protests too much. The life-affirming nurturing was hilariously literal in a recent episode wherein a baby space creature imprints on the Enterprise, which served as a kind of wet nurse to the space suckling. The Enterprise is becoming a real mother ship.

Gone, too, is the instinctive dramatic resort to violence, battles and male bonding epitomized by the macho triad of Kirk-Spock-McCoy. Where Kirk's leadership role was always laced with a randy and aggressive machismo, Picard is a stalwart father figure. Picard's omnipotence is unquestioned, however—he has no McCoy bellying into his ears. Hence the emotional pay-off in New Trek's best-received episodes when the sinister Borg captured and redesigned Picard, the vestibule of serene masculine authority. Against so sturdy a patriarch, the sons and daughters never elbow out Big Daddy. In particular, Riker seems positively immobilized by Picard's guiding authority, reluctant to go it alone and forgo the protective arms of home.

Riker's separation anxiety may be congenital, but for the Trekkers who once shared his malady, no less than three varieties of TREK can be depended on for cultish dependence and mutli-media devotion. Multiplying narratives, procreating aliens and spiraling through screen space, one can imagine the Roddenberrian baton—tri-quarter?—passing through far distant and numberless star dates, from one generation to the next generation to the next. □

TREK MOVIE PARADISE LOST

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nature of the trick is the only suspense in the story. But you'd say this to Bill and he'd say, 'No, no, it's the greatest adventure of all time.' And I'd say, 'No, it's not an adventure, because everyone is ahead of you.' So what we have to do is make the getting there as interesting as possible.

"Bill is a very quick and bright man, but he wasn't easy to restrain. He can be conned and intellectually fooled, and that was the only weapon Ralph [Winter] and I had after a while." Indeed, while giving a talk to film students at the University of Southern California while Shatner was maneuvering to commandeer STAR TREK V, producer Winter attested that the thought of Shatner at the helm was causing him lost sleep.

"Bill would come in and present a concept, and he thought he was discovering the wheel. And you couldn't say, 'No, that shot was used in LAWRENCE OF ARABIA, it's not worth \$100,000 to get that shot in, and anyway, it won't prove you are a great director.' It is funny how first-time directors try to be pioneers in craft. Nimoy, on the other hand, is three yards and

cloud of dust. Fundamental. Here's the camera—shoot a movie. Willy Wyler shot like that. It works when the actors are working well, and the TREK family adored Leonard."

Although Roddenberry has never acknowledged him as such, Bennett regards himself as the custodian of Roddenberry's flame. Bennett came in when the franchise looked as if it might die and he revived it. The plaque on his wall is small, but he is as proud of it and what it signifies, as he is of his Emmy.

"It was a big part of my life. I was given an assignment to do and I did it very well." □

STAR TREK VI

continued from page 23

Kirk's apparently implacable libido (the old codger is sixty, for God's sake!), snaps, "What is with you anyway?"

In a third scene, Meyer glibly acknowledges his movie as competition for yet another science fiction epic once slated for a Christmas release—Fox's ALIEN 3—also situated on a prison planet. "In space," observed Chekov (Walter Koenig) in a reference to the advertising campaign for ALIEN, "no one can hear you sweat."

Whether Meyer is sweating over the prospects of his latest Trekfest, however, is doubtful. No dyed-in-the-wool Treknik, the 45-year-old Meyer began his film career at Paramount in 1969 as an associate publicist and has been widely regarded as the savior of the studio's premiere franchise. Meyer does not, however, comfortably accept that characterization—at least not insofar as the current film is concerned.

"This wasn't about saving

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TREK," said Meyer. "The idea for STAR TREK VI originated with Leonard [Nimoy], who wanted me to do it with him. He simply didn't want to direct it. It's far too much work to be in makeup at that hour of the morning and to be directing as well.

"Leonard came out to Cape Cod in July, where I was resting from finishing a movie called COMPANY BUSINESS (released in September). We walked up and down the beach and he told me his idea and I said, 'Oh, I know how to do that.'"

Meyer co-wrote the script with Denny Martin Flynn, a writer who has worked as his assistant for four years, a former Broadway dancer who wrote a book on the making of the Broadway musical A CHORUS LINE called *What They Did For Love*. "He did a first pass," said Meyer, "and Leonard and I have been rewriting ever since." Credit for the story goes to Nimoy and Meyer.

However Meyer feels about TREK, crew members attest that he delivered the goods with his customary aplomb. "He has such vision," said Ron Pipes, a makeup and prosthetic effects assistant for the production. "Nick knew exactly what he wanted, and it was wonderful." □

TREK TOP TEN

continued from page 27

sidered their single most original and well-wrought sketch: an inspired satire in which an NBC executive from 1969 Earth invades the deck of the Enterprise and cancels the show. Michaels' own next generation more recently exploited guest host William Shatner for a one-two punch. First, Shatner sends up the show and himself by dissing a convention of STAR TREK nerds ("Get a life!"). Second, he plays captain/maitre d' to an Enterprise made over into an orbiting restaurant threatened by Dana Carvey's full-chested impersonation of a wrathful Khan ("KKKKeerhkk...") and a corrupt health inspector.

Most Humiliating STAR TREK Moments: Those non-cinematic ancillary marketing ploys by original cast members (e.g. Leonard Nimoy's poetry and autobiography, Shatner's record album).

Most Bonehead STAR TREK decision: Misplacing Spock's brain? Letting Shatner direct? Transporting Beverly Crusher from sick bay in the third season of THE NEXT GENERATION? It sure can't be cancelling the original series—that turned out to be a brilliant, if most illogical, ratings strategy. □

ADDAMS FAMILY

continued from page 47

stairs, and we shot her only from one camera angle, from the front, and it was only from the waist up."

Morticia's tight-fitting dress was the cause of even more problems. There were tentacles at the bottom of it. "The tentacles would be put on her only when we would be shooting full figure," said Steinmetz, "because it was literally impossible for her to walk with those stupid tentacles on." But the final indignity was, "She couldn't sit down in it. We had one of those rolling things you can stand in, propped up. So we had her propped up in a corner somewhere. We would look up every now and then and she still would be there. She would always be around."

Shooting in a house without movable walls caused problems for Ted Cassidy in his role as Thing. "For a big man, he was graceful," said Steinmetz. "His body was not unwieldy. He had a way of twisting and contorting that frame into some of the most amazing positions. For the scene in the bedroom where Gomez and Morticia were standing next to the bed and Thing popped out of the box, the two of them were standing there straddling Ted who was lay-

ing on the floor, on about four pillows, straining to get his hand up to the right level. And John had a foot between Ted's legs."

Steinmetz said he and Levy collaborated closely on the production, shot on tape. Levy previewed the footage from two monitors in a separate off-camera room, and would consult with Steinmetz, making suggestions for reshoots if necessary. "David and I had a terrific working relationship," said Steinmetz. "I was the director and had the final say. But I respected David's opinion in a lot of areas, because he obviously knew what he had. And he had put this thing together from its infancy on television. So I really relied on him a lot. I would bounce ideas off of him."

Despite all the effort, the final product was not very successful or up to the standards of the original series. Though in full color, the photography looks grainy and underlit and the story is silly and boring, padded out to feature length, sorely missing the touch of series producer Nat Perrin. Most of the time, it seems that Astin is acting in his own little movie, far apart from the other cast members. The show does have one or two fine moments, mostly valiant efforts by the cast to overcome the less-than-inspired material. □

LETTERS

STAR TREK PENNY-PINCHING

Re: STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION [22:2:16]: if I see any more Caucasian, humanoid aliens who speak perfect American-accented English and sport silly, lumpy foreheads I'm going to vomit. Aliens should *struggle* with English every now and again! And why are there never any Asian or Black alien races?

More importantly, in my and your magazine's opinion, the best episodes of TNG include "Best of Both Worlds: Part 1," "Yesterday's Enterprise," "Q Who," and "Heart of Glory," all larger-budget spectacles dependent upon new sets and exciting effects, not boring shipboard yakfests. Paramount take notice: season four was consistently well-written, but thoroughly unexciting. The purse strings were showing. Increase the damn budget. Please.

Jim Cirile
Los Angeles, CA 90068

OBVIOUS, WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT

A note to all Stan Winston fans: the picture of Robert Patrick [22:2:15], the actor who plays T-1000 in TERMINATOR 2: JUDGMENT DAY is not a prosthetic appliance he is wearing. Rather, it is a mechanical duplicate of him with a hole pre-sculpted into the puppet. Amazing isn't it?

Benjamin Mote
Clovis, CA 93612

THUMBS DOWN ON T2, CFQ

After reading Thomas Doherty's review [22:2:14], I've finally gone to see TERMINATOR 2. Only to wonder why nobody told me that:

The most expensive American film ever is so badly structured that it needs *narration* to hold it together. That one bit of business—the Terminator obeying young John Connor's order not to kill—is so overdone that the audience bursts into laughter at the scene of the hobbled SWAT team in the Cyberdyne lobby? That the fabulous pacing of the original has been replaced by a series of lumbering, Indiana Jones-style set pieces, which vie so desperately for audience response that the filmmakers resort to having the killer cyborgs make *jokes*!

Why didn't *Cinefantastique* tell me this, especially since you took

the trouble to deploy as seasoned a model as T-Doherty to review TERMINATOR 2? Could it be that *Cinefantastique*, like James Cameron, has obviously lost it? Your October issue, which is mostly a fawning, uncritical press-kit for STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION, makes me suspect just that.

David Lee
London, Ontario

BETTY PAGES PHOTOGRAPHER

I enjoyed your August issue and appreciated the mention of my name in the Brinke Stevens/Betty Page article [22:1:26]. It's a unique feeling to be immortalized as a comic book character in THE ROCKETEER! It came as quite a surprise. You may also like to know that I was able to photograph "Rocketeer's" creator, Dave Stevens, recently for his new publicity photo.

Ken Marcus
Hollywood, CA 90038

MORE FROM "THE BONEYARD"

I would like to clear up a misconception concerning the special

makeup effects of THE BONEYARD [22:1:30]. Mainly that it was very much a team effort. Bill Corso performed admirably under extreme pressure and budgetary constraints, but there are some unsung heroes who I feel contributed immensely to the success of the creature effects and deserve recognition, namely, sculptors Richard Alonzo, Andy Clement, Ken Brilliant and mechanical designers Tom Williamson and Tim Hawkins. Their talents and stamina made the impossible, possible.

A tip of the hat is also due producer Richard Brophy who magically managed to turn a dime into a dollar. For the record, THE BONEYARD was made for a skeletal \$850,000, much cheaper than most people have assumed.

James Cummins, director
Asheville, NC 28813

RIPPER, LESS THAN RIPPING

There have been enough versions of JACK THE RIPPER [21:4:59] to either produce yawns in the overindulgent who've seen them all (and might not be tempted by yet another) or to prod the atten-

tion of fans who'd be curious as to what novelties "the most definitive" might hold. However, there simply isn't anything in Bill Kelley's piece about the '59 film (story angle, background, etc.) to suggest any interest for the jaded or the fanatic.

I wouldn't like to think, in the light of the '50s glut of largely undistinguished Ripper fare, that the carrot was dangling just to drum up sales for Sinister Cinema, for a rare but unreviewed (hence unrecommended) film. So, instead of shouting "*caveat emptor*," I simply would like to suggest CFQ take a little bit more care when it labels a trivia piece with the portentous word "rediscover." It's not as if someone had rediscovered a lost print of Chaney's LONDON AFTER MIDNIGHT, is it? It only makes sense that, if you're going to herald a film, you'd also want to be able to honestly recommend it.

Peter Muller
Richmond Hill, NY 11419

[JACK THE RIPPER was not available at press time. For the record, it is a cut below its Hammer competition of the period, yet still worth acquiring.]

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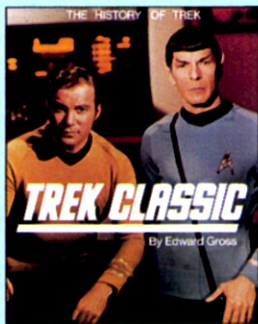
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